Visitation Returns and Nineteenth-Century Anglicanism in Oxford and its Surrounding Parishes

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With a special thanks to my family for their love, patience, help, and support.

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Abstract

This thesis examines 528 nineteenth-century visitation returns from Oxford and its surrounding parishes. In chapter one it is established that Oxfordshire's unusually high survival rate of these documents makes it possible, with the development of a relational database, to examine data longitudinally over an entire century. A core aim of the thesis is to establish if doing so yields significant insight. Chapter two considers the visitation itself, and how it was reformed over the century to ensure its usefulness. Chapter three is a prosopographical study of the 467 clergy listed in the returns, and identifies the mid-century as an important pivot point in discussing parochial Anglican activity. A reinvigoration — perhaps a revival of sorts — is identified over the second half of the century and University reform is found to be a crucial factor. Chapter four examines two key issues raised in the returns: inadequate room for church services and meetings, and competition from protestant nonconformity and Roman Catholicism. Despite being a significant drain on time and resources much church building took place over the century. A key reason that justified this was the building's potential to convey a religious message of spiritual authority and value, but the ministers also made great use of lower-status structures for mission rooms and halls. At Oxford dissent and Roman Catholicism struggled during this time. Chapter five measures seating capacity, communicants, and service attendees. The figures that are calculated corroborate chapters three and four by identifying significant increases, with communion participation and church attendance rising faster as a percentage than population growth. The overall conclusion is that by the end of the nineteenth century the Church remained a

substantial influence on life in the parishes of this review, more so than in the first half of the century.

List of abbreviations

Bodl.	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
CC	*Official Report of the Church Congress; Report of the Proceedings of the Church Congress; Authorized Report of the Church Congress; —th Annual Meeting of the Church Congress* (1860–) [title varies]
Church	When uppercase in running text: Established Church of England
Clergy	When uppercase in running text: all ordained members of the Established Church of England
ODC	*Oxford Diocesan Calendar and Clergy List* (1860–)
ICBS	Church Building Society; from 1828 Incorporated Church Building Society (also from 1818 known as Society for Promoting the Enlargement and Building of Churches and Chapels; and from 1828 as Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building and Repairing of Churches and Chapels)
JOJ	*Jackson's Oxford Journal*
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
OC	*Oxford Chronicle*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
OHC	Oxfordshire History Centre, Oxford
OT	*Oxford Times*
OUH	*Oxford University, City, and County Herald*
University	When uppercase in running text: University of Oxford
VCH Oxfordshire	*Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of the County of Oxford,* vol. 1: ed. L.F. Salzman (London, Dawson: 1939); vol. 3: *The University of Oxford*, ed. H.E. Salter and Mary D. Lobel (London, Dawson: 1954); vol. 4: *The City of Oxford*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London, Dawson: 1979); vol. 5: *Bullingdon Hundred*, ed. Mary D. Lobel (London, Dawson: 1957).
VR/VRs	Visitation return/returns held at the Oxfordshire History Centre: for their shelf marks by visitation year see p. 419.

Churches in this thesis: naming convention

The table below lists the main 35 churches in this thesis and how they are named.

Five churches are systematically identified using a shorter form of their name; their full names are included in parentheses in the first column.

Running text	Tables and graphs
All Saints Headington	Headington All Saints
All Saints Oxford	Oxford All Saints
Boatman's Chapel	Oxford St Thomas: Boatman's Chapel
Holy Trinity Headington Quarry	Headington Quarry Holy Trinity
Holy Trinity St Ebbe	Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity
Iron Church St John the Evangelist	Cowley St John Iron Church Cowley St John St John the Evangelist
St Aldate	Oxford St Aldate
St Andrew	Headington St Andrew
St Barnabas	Oxford St Barnabas
St Clement	Oxford St Clement
St Cross Holywell	Oxford St Cross Holywell
St Ebbe	Oxford St Ebbe
St Frideswide	Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide
St George (the Martyr)	Oxford Mary Magdalen: St George
St Giles	Oxford St Giles
St James Cowley	Cowley St James
St John the Baptist Oxford	Oxford St John the Baptist
St John the Baptist Summertown	Summertown St John the Baptist
St Margaret Binsey	Binsey St Margaret
St Margaret North Oxford	North Oxford St Margaret
St Martin Carfax	Oxford St Martin Carfax
St Mary (the Virgin) Oxford	Oxford St Mary
St Mary (the Virgin) Iffley	Iffley St Mary
SS Mary and John	Cowley St John SS Mary and John
SS Mary and Nicholas	Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas
St Mary Magdalen	Oxford St Mary Magdalen
St Matthew Grandpont	Oxford St Aldate: St Matthew Grandpont
St Michael (at the North Gate)	Oxford St Michael
St Nicholas Marston	Marston St Nicholas
St Paul	Oxford St Paul
St Peter in the East	Oxford St Peter in the East
St Peter-le-Bailey	Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey
SS Philip and James	Oxford SS Philip and James
St Thomas (the Martyr)	Oxford St Thomas

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1: Introduction

> A duller collection of facts and dates, than Bishop Gastrell's we have never opened … we do not think there is any individual to whom this volume will have any attractions.[1]

Following a brief introduction to visitation returns, this chapter examines how these complex documents have been discussed and applied in scholarly work. The focus of the literature review is on studies where visitation returns were the main source drawn upon in the research. It argues that the potential of a longitudinal analysis of these documents has not been adequately explored, especially for returns from the nineteenth century. This leads to a discussion on the methodology followed in this thesis. An important component of the methodology is the geographical limit determined by deciding which parishes to include, and the chapter ends with a study

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1 *The Athenaeum,* no. 964 (1846), p. 390 [review of vol. 1 of F.R. Raines, ed., *Notitia Cestriensis; or Historical Notices of the Diocese of Chester, by the Right Rev. Francis Gastrell* (1845)].

of the region that defines the parameters in this thesis: Oxford and its surrounding parishes.

Visitation returns

In nineteenth-century Oxfordshire the annual (or sometimes biannual) ecclesiastical visitation and the triennial episcopal visitation had become deeply embedded within the religious rhythm of diocesan life.[2] Oxford bishops met their clergy and laity through visitation 30 times out of a possible 32 opportunities over the century. In Oxford the episcopal visitation's engagement with clergy and laity was widely covered by the local press, and by the middle of the century had become a closely followed public event.[3]

The visitation returns — also called parochial returns, visitation articles, visitation queries, bishop's queries, parish returns, articles of enquiry, or clergy answers — were printed questionnaires circulated to each incumbent or officiating minister in advance of the bishop's visit. An important development within the visitation over the nineteenth century was the way data taken from completed visitation returns were incorporated into the bishop's charge to contribute to a discussion on parochial

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2 In this thesis visitations attended by the diocese's archdeacon or chancellor are called 'ecclesiastical visitations and visitations attended by a bishop are called 'visitations', or 'episcopal visitations' if greater clarity is required. Responses to the annual queries answered by churchwardens are referred to as 'churchwarden returns' and responses to the (mostly) triennial returns submitted by clergy to their bishop as either 'visitation returns' or just 'returns', or, if for clarity greater specificity is required, 'episcopal visitation returns'. 'Visitation material' in this thesis refers to visitation returns, specula, and other paper records directly related to the visitation process, although the focus throughout this thesis is almost entirely on visitation returns only.

3 Newspaper reports of the event often exceeded 10,000 words; see for example 'Primary Visitation of the Bishop of Oxford', *JOJ* (20 April 1872), p. 6 [c. 13,000 words].

matters. As such, the original intention of the nineteenth-century visitation returns was for them to be read and absorbed as a single block, and not to exist as isolated documents.

Not only were these returns used by bishops to form a picture of religious activity in their diocese for a visitation year, but answers could be compared with previous visitations to identify patterns over time. The usefulness of this was clearly being appreciated by the start of the eighteenth century, attested by the wide adoption of a speculum, a digest or survey of visitation answers ordered parish by parish and updated at successive visitations, and, in some instances, by successive bishops.[4] These summaries, usually enlarged with details from other records, gave bishops what Jeremy Gregory has described as 'ready access to a database' of information that can include a parish's patronage, social structure, clergy, schools and charities, and service provision.[5] In many dioceses a speculum is now the only surviving record of the Clergy's visitation returns, with their original returns either lost or destroyed. Specula can nevertheless supply details and nuance that can challenge traditional assumptions about the Church at that time,[6] and some of them provide much extra relevant detail.[7]

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4 W.J. Sheils, 'Bishops and their Dioceses: Reform of Visitation in the Anglican Church c.1680–c.1760', *CCEd Online Journal,* 1 (2007) [online: http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/cce_a1/; accessed 2 September 2021].

5 Jeremy Gregory, 'Introduction', in Jeremy Gregory, (ed.), *The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker* (Woodbridge: Church of England Record Society, 1995), p. x.

6 For example, in his review of Secker's speculum Gregory notes that Virgin's picture of an eighteenth-century 'age of negligence' downplays the many areas of clerical activity and vitality; see Jeremy Gregory, (ed.), *The Speculum of Archbishop Thomas Secker* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), p. xiv.

7 Perhaps the most extraordinary example of this is Sylvia Watts, (ed.), *The Visitation Records of Archdeacon Joseph Plymley, 1792–1838* (Keele: Centre for Local History, Keele University, 2010), where the extra information is more detailed than most directories.

The primary purpose of this study is, in a sense, to adapt and build on a century's-old practice established by English bishops in various specula by collating data from successive visitations, and supplementing this information with details from other records to picture religious activity forming a narrative over time. The result is a longitudinal study of religious activity within a set of parishes over the entire nineteenth century. This approach continues to be widely recognized as of particular value to religious studies, not only because it helps measure religious change and its impact on other aspects of life,[8] but because it helps address the preponderance of qualitative data that dominates the historiography of so much of today's writing on religious history.[9]

From this research it will be argued that a more nuanced understanding of the purpose and function of the Anglican churches in this thesis is revealed, which in part follows from examining the relationship that existed between the city's parish churches and its most prestigious local institution, the University.

Literature review

Historians investigating nineteenth-century Anglican activity have acknowledged the utility of visitation material in supplying isolated details of a specific parish, and their appearance among the footnotes of Victoria County History volumes and other local studies is commonplace. Diana McClatchey's 1960 study on Oxfordshire clergy from

[8] David Voas, 'Religious Involvement Over the Life Course: Problems of Measurement and Classification', *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies,* 6/2 (2015), pp. 212–13.
[9] Steve Bruce, *Researching Religion: why we Need Social Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 100.

1777 to 1869 is the most comprehensive local example.[10] But academic studies that systematically draw upon a large number of responses are far fewer.

With every visitation return in a different handwriting, transcribing these records is laborious and difficult, although printed editions were already being collated by the mid-nineteenth century.[11] Such publications have mostly been treated by editors as specialized texts to assist local historians researching the parishes covered.[12] Within these editions, visitations of the Georgian church greatly outnumber those for the Victorian Church. As part of this study I have reviewed from the Georgian period 16 editions of visitation returns, 14 editions of specula, and eight secondary sources that rely heavily on these records.[13] Alongside two studies that traverse these periods, for the Victorian era there are at present only four editions of visitation returns, two

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10 Diana McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy, 1777–1869: a Study of the Established Church and of the Role of its Clergy in Local Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); aside from a few passing references concerning Headington on pp. 74–76, nearly all the parishes covered in this thesis were excluded by McClatchey on methodological grounds.

11 Francis Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis; or, Historical Notices of the Diocese of Chester* ([S.I.]: Chetham Society, 1845–50); this edition of a speculum is heavily annotated, mostly with biographical information of parish elite.

12 Patricia Bell, *Episcopal Visitations in Bedfordshire, 1706–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), p. x.

13 For a full list of published visitation material up to 2009 see Clive D. Field, *Religious Statistics in Great Britain: An Historical Introduction* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2009) [electronic copy, accessed 1 February 2014; publicly available at http://www.brin.ac.uk/commentary/drs/], appendix 4, pp. 66–69; to be added to that list is Philippa M. Hoskin, *A Decent, Regular and Orderly State? Parochial Visitations of the Archdeaconries of York and the East Riding, 1720–1730* (York: Borthwick Institute, University of York, 2010); John Broad, (ed.), *Bishop Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns from the Diocese of Lincoln, 1706–1715*, 2 vols (London: British Academy, 2012); Howard Fisher, *Church Life in Georgian Nottinghamshire: Archbishop Drummond's Parish Visitation Returns, 1764* (Nottingham: Thoroton Society, 2012) [with only a short introduction].

specula, and two secondary articles.[14] There are two studies not of visitation returns but covering records similar in nature.[15] Mark Smith's 2019 study of Oxfordshire visitation returns for 1914 and 1918 is a rare example of analysis of twentieth-century returns, examining liturgical change between these two visitations.[16]

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[14] Discussed further below is Clive D. Field, 'A Godly People? Aspects of Religious Practice in the Diocese of Oxford, 1738–1936', *Southern History,* 14 (1992). Editions of nineteenth-century returns with helpful preface material are Michael Cook, (ed.), *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821: Bishop Carey's Replies to Queries before Visitation*, 2 vols (Torquay: Devonshire Press, 1958–1960); M.R. Austin, (ed.), *The Church in Derbyshire in 1823–4: the Parochial Visitation of the Rev. Samuel Butler, Archdeacon of Derby in the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry* (Derby: Derbyshire Archaeological Society, 1972) [the more recent John Beckett, Margery Tranter, and Wendy Bateman, (eds.), *Visitation Returns from the Archdeaconry of Derby, 1718–1824* (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 2003) looks at only a single nineteenth-century return 'added for the sake of completing the series', p. xix]; Edward Royle, (ed.), *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Craven, Diocese of Ripon, 1858* (Heslington: Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, 2009); Edward Royle and Ruth M. Larsen, *Archbishop Thomson's Visitation Returns for the Diocese of York, 1865* (York: Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, 2006) [see also article on same returns: Edward Royle, 'The Parish Community Through the Vicarage Window: Nineteenth-Century Clergy Visitation Returns', *Family and Community History* (2009)]; Victor A. Hatley, *The Church in Victorian Northampton: Visitation Records of Bishop Magee, 1872–1886* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Record Society, 1992). Another edition of nineteenth-century returns, but with very little prefatory matter, is E.P. Baker, (ed.), *Bishop Wilberforce's Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Oxford in the year 1854* (Banbury: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1954). Not an edition, but a survey of holdings with a brief discussion of content, is Norman McCord, *The Days of Visitation: an Examination of Some Durham Records, 1857–1936* (Durham: Dean and Chapter of Durham, 1987); on nineteenth-century specula see David Robinson, (ed.), *Visitations of the Archdeaconry of Stafford, 1829–1841* (London: HMSO, 1980); and Jane Platt, (ed.), *The Diocese of Carlisle, 1814–1855: Chancellor Walter Fletcher's 'Diocesan Book', with Additional Material from Bishop Percy's Parish Notebooks* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2015); Watts, *Visitation Records of Plymley*.

[15] Mark Smith, *Doing the Duty of the Parish: Surveys of the Church in Hampshire, 1810* (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 2004); and Judith Burg, (ed.), *Religion in Hertfordshire, 1847 to 1851* (Cambridge: Hertfordshire Record Society, 1995); Smith's edition is of Hampshire records that were completed and collated in a manner very similar to a visitation return and triggered by a perceived threat from the ideology connected with the French Revolution, and a growing concern over a rise in the number of dissenters, while Burg's edition is a survey taken by a Baptist minister concerned about the quantity and quality of preaching and looking for parishes where a chapel or missionary station might be welcomed.

[16] Mark Smith, (ed.), *The Parish in Wartime: Bishop Gore's Visitations of Oxfordshire, 1914 and 1918* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019).

Only two book-length studies that systematically refer to visitation returns were found in preparation for this thesis; both of them draw upon more than one visitation, and both examine the eighteenth century. Judith Jago's study of the diocese of York examines the visitation returns for 1761 and 1776,[17] primarily to help evaluate the episcopal career of archbishop Robert Drummond and measure his pastoral influence. Viviane Barrie-Curien's study of the diocese of London includes a study of the returns from eight visitations 1723–90 that takes up roughly half the book.[18] Barrie-Curien's work is a study of the Anglican Clergy, and her reference to other biographical sources to supplement this work is similar to the methodology followed in chapter three in this thesis.[19] Barrie-Curien's analysis, however, is hampered by the nature of the surviving records, where very few parishes appear in successive visitations,[20] making comparison less useful. This is especially so for tables 35–46 in the book's appendix, which are not properly comparing like for like.[21]

All these editions provide a more comprehensive picture of religious life and activity within a diocese. As a totality, visitation returns cover not just instances of the unusual, the progressive, or the bad, a bias found in records such as newspapers and court documents. Some of these critical editions include a preface that outlines the

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17 Judith Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church: Visitation Studies of the Diocese of York, 1761–1776* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997).

18 Viviane Barrie-Curien, *Clergé et pastorale en Angleterre au XVIIIè siècle: le diocèse de Londres* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992); see also Viviane Barrie-Curien, 'La vie des paroisses en Angleterre a la fin du XVIIIe siecle: encadrement et résidence pastorale', *Histoire, Économie, et Société,* 5/2 (1986); I am grateful for Dr Rosemary Lancaster's assistance with the French translation.

19 Barrie-Curien made this portion of her book manageable by only studying a random sample of 500 clergy from a complete list of about 2,000 men, Barrie-Curien, *Clergé et pastorale en Angleterre au XVIIIè siècle*, p. 39.

20 *ibid.*, p. 217.

21 *ibid.*, pp. 419–33; Barrie-Curien of course accounts for this.

historical and religious context, a biographical study of the relevant bishop, and, in some instances, statistical analysis drawn from all of the returns. A few of these introductions are substantial, and provide insight into a range of social and ecclesiastical issues. Jago notes that the returns capture a moment, in microcosm, of church life, situating evidence of the Church's failings within a wider context of the ordinary and the successful.[22] Clive Field has observed something similar when noting that visitation returns help bring to light the religious attitudes of ordinary people.[23] Edward Royle, perhaps the historian with the most experience working with nineteenth-century visitation returns, values the way these documents help identify the relationships defining parish community, supplying details on the degree to which clergy were able to position the Church at the centre of the local community, mirroring and embodying locally the hierarchal nature of Church and state at a national level. [24]

Reviewing returns from the same parishes for more than one visitation would allow the historian to compare responses and reflect on possible reasons for any changes during intervening years. In the words of a reviewer of Royle's edition of Ripon's 1858 visitation returns:

> It would have been wonderfully productive to consider the results of 1858 alongside those of perhaps the 1880s, in order to trace specific changes. However, as many frustrated historians will understand, one can only work with materials that have been preserved by the whim of fate.[25]

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22 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 14.
23 Field, 'A Godly People?', p. 46.
24 Royle, 'Parish Community', pp. 6–8.
25 P. Shoemaker Stephen, *Church History and Religious Culture,* 91/3–4 (2011), p. 578 [review of Edward Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Craven, Diocese of Ripon, 1858,* University of York, 2009].

Royle is in complete agreement, noting elsewhere that:

> The visitation returns cannot, of course, give a rounded view of the total history of the parish, but a chronological series of returns from successive visitations relating to a single parish should be an ingredient in any longitudinal local history.[26]

The main reason for a scarcity of such studies is that the limited survival of these records makes it not possible. The episcopal visitation returns were usually considered the personal property of the bishop, and, perhaps also because of the confidential nature of the responses, for many bishops it was common practice for the returns to be destroyed once information had been collated.[27] In these instances, what sometimes remains is a diocesan book — sometimes called a speculum or notitia — that recorded, usually parish by parish, answers to the returns that the bishop considered helpful to have available. This practice waned over the course of the nineteenth century.[28] The survival of nineteenth-century churchwardens' returns is equally patchy: only one edition is at present completed.[29]

The result today is a scattering of these returns across different county record offices with varying degrees of completeness. From the visitation returns from Derbyshire, the survival from the parish of Alfreton of its returns for 1751, 1772, and 1824 is singled out as remarkable, in that it is the only parish in the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry where longitudinal analysis is even possible.[30] For the diocese of Ripon no returns survive for the entire nineteenth century apart from 1858, since the bishop

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26 Royle, 'Parish Community', p. 20.
27 Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. v.
28 Gregory, 'Introduction', pp. ix, xii.
29 Robinson, *Visitations of the Archdeaconry of Stafford, 1829–1841*; for an example from the eighteenth century see Hoskin, *Decent, Regular and Orderly State*.
30 Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xix.

had them destroyed once salient material had been used in preparation for his charge.[31] For the diocese of Worcestershire there are no surviving nineteenth-century visitations in their catalogues; in Gloucestershire the earliest visitation returns date from 1907; and in the diocese of Salisbury all returns are missing between 1801 and 1864.[32] In Winchester there are no visitation returns between 1788 and 1899[33] and in both Derby and Staffordshire there is for each a single episcopal visitation return for one parish for the entire century.[34] In Dorset and Wiltshire there is no complete set of returns before 1864.[35]

Despite a consensus that diachronic data are crucial to making sense of wider census statistics,[36] even where such a study might be possible it has not been carried out. There are very few published examples that analyse a consecutive run of visitation returns from the same parishes. The closest might be Hatley's 1992 edition of five sets of visitation returns 1862–86 of the rural deanery of Northampton. From this set are 11 parishes that appear more than once, but no longitudinal analysis of these took place.[37] A similar observation applies to Ward's edition of visitation returns from eighteenth-century Surrey (covering years 1725, 1764, and 1788) and

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31 Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. v.

32 Clive D. Field, '*Status animarum*: a Religious Profile of the Diocese of Salisbury in the 1780s', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine,* 106 (2013), p. 219.

33 Alistair Beecher uncovered a total of five individual visitation returns within the 159 years covered in AlistairBeecher, 'Keeping the Faith: Church and Community in Alresford, c.1780–1939', doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2017; with thanks to Beecher for this information.

34 Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby, p. xix*.; Robinson, *Visitations of the Archdeaconry of Stafford, 1829–1841,* p. xxxiv, n. 12.

35 Field, '*Status animarum*', p. 229, n.47.

36 See for example Robin Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 19.

37 Hatley, *Church in Northampton*, pp. ix–xxv.

Hampshire (covering years 1725, 1765, and 1788).[38] For eighteenth-century Surrey only 13 parishes appear in all three sets, and again no analysis was applied.[39]

The survival of the visitation returns for the diocese of Oxford is thus extraordinary. The visitation returns, which include returns for the archdeaconries of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire once they were included within the enlarged diocese of Oxford in 1836 and 1845 respectively, are unique in the comprehensive archive of returns that remain, the high response rates which they attracted, and the historical continuity that these holdings therefore provide.[40] In the nineteenth century the only instances where a scheduled visitation did not take place were when Bishop Charles Lloyd died in 1829 before his first visitation arrangements had been finalized, and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who delayed his primary visitation by three years to 1848 (despite the last one having taken place in 1842) in order to familiarize himself with the diocese.[41] For the nineteenth century the only substantial loss is the returns for 1842, 1848, and 1851, leaving a gap of 16 years between the 1838 and 1854 visitations.[42] Surviving churchwarden returns for Oxfordshire are less extensive: there are a handful of returns bundled with episcopal returns between 1802 and

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38 W. Reginald Ward, (ed.), *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-Century Surrey: Replies to Bishops' Visitations* (Guildford: Surrey Record Society, 1994); and W. Reginald Ward, (ed.), *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-Century Hampshire: Replies to Bishops' Visitations* (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 1995).

39 Ward, *Parson and Parish in Eighteenth-Century Surrey*.

40 In total, the OHC holds episcopal returns from 1738 to 1936. The only substantial gaps are 1741–59 and 1842–54, although returns 1778–87 are significantly incomplete.

41 See for example notes on the parishes of the city of Oxford inserted into his notebook for 1846: Samuel Wilberforce, *The Diocese Books of Samuel Wilberforce: Bishop of Oxford, 1845–1869*, ed. R.K. Pugh and Margaret Pugh (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 2008), pp. 15–16.

42 The 1851 religious census provides much of the enumerative data that the 1851 returns would have provided; issues in comparing the 1851 religious census data with the visitation returns are discussed in chapter five, p. 310.

1823, a moderately complete collection for 1835, and then almost complete sets for 1848, 1851, 1857, 1860, and 1869.[43]

It was the unusually extensive holding of Oxfordshire's episcopal returns that attracted Field to publish an article on the diocese based almost exclusively on the returns, covering about 600 parishes over two centuries. The sheer scale of the project within an article-length piece of writing, however, necessitated that he refer to only some of the data in the returns, with a focus on questions that elicited numerical responses.[44]

Methodology

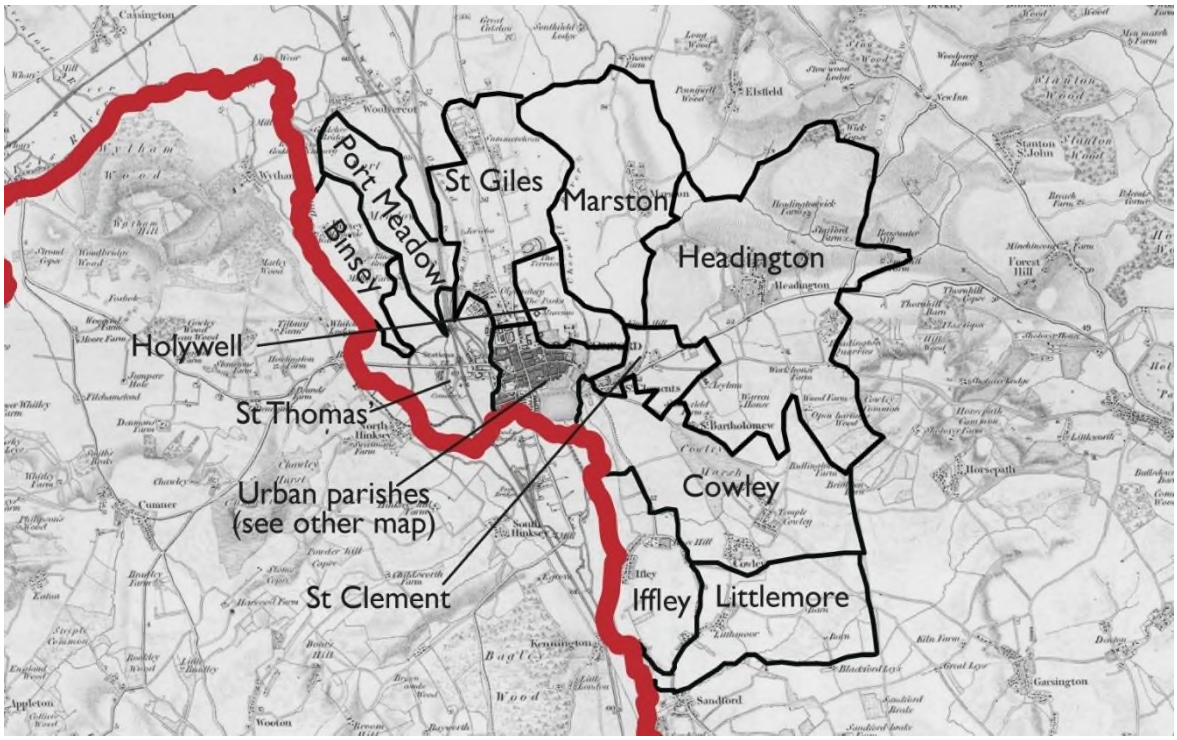
This study covers all of Oxford's urban parishes, as well as the suburban and rural parishes that bordered them and were in Oxfordshire in 1800 (Image 1-1 and Image 1-2). The rationale for this selection is methodological and pragmatic. The high level of detail captured in the returns, together with the wealth of supporting information, makes it prudent to limit the number of parishes being examined. The mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas (Graph 1-1, p.27) includes enough parishes to capture a suitably diverse range of religious expression, and are few enough in number that human agency at the parochial level can be taken into account. It also makes the

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43 The 1835 returns are ruridecanal returns completed by churchwardens: for Oxford the rural dean in 1835 was John Henry Newman. The churchwarden returns for 1848 to 1869 were all years when an episcopal visitation was taking place and the archdeacon's court was inhibited, suggesting that the reason they survived is that the returns were incorporated into the bishop's archives at the palace instead of becoming the property of the archdeacon.

44 Field, 'A Godly People?', p. 49.

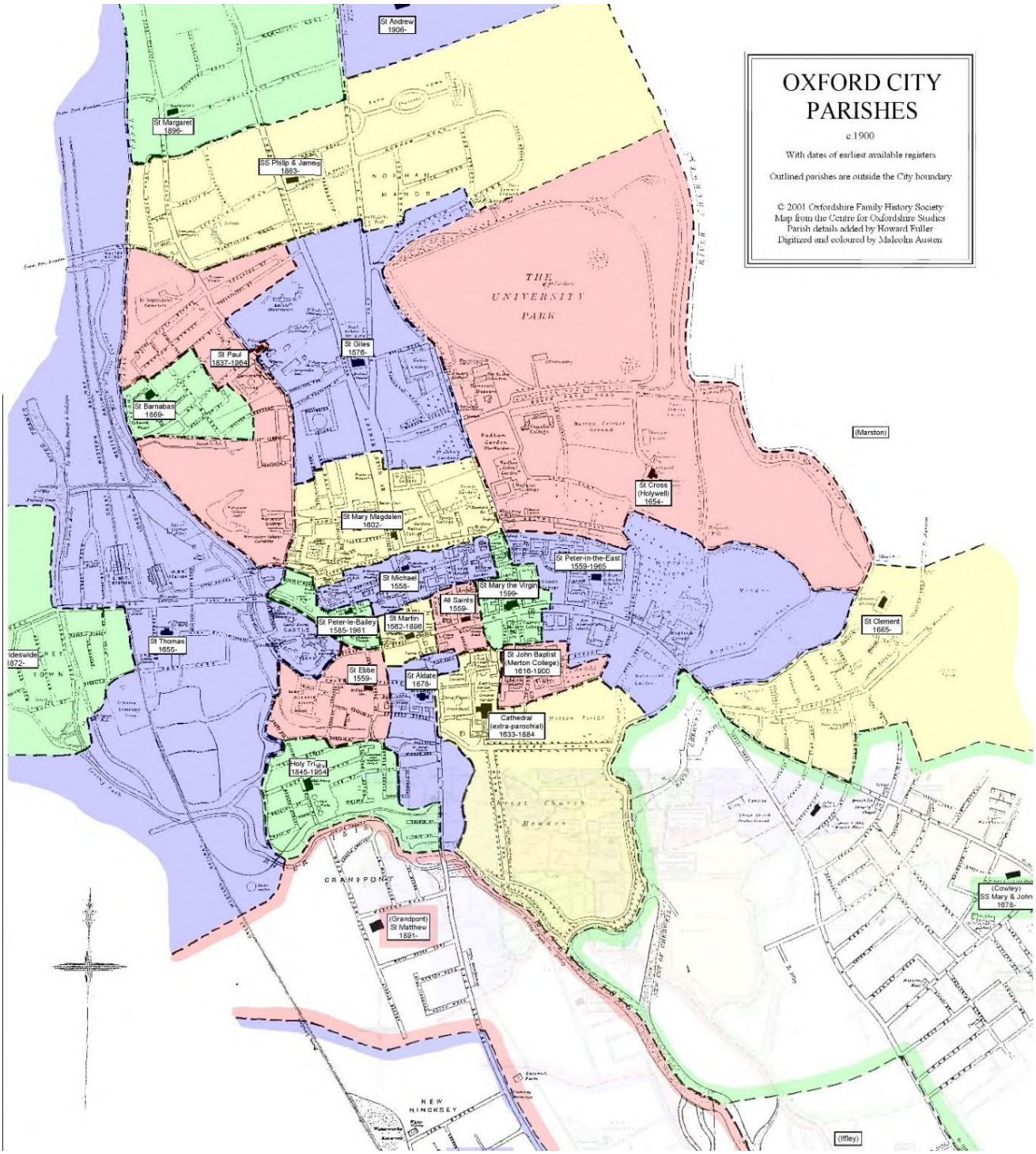
Image 1-1 Map of parishes around Oxford included in this review



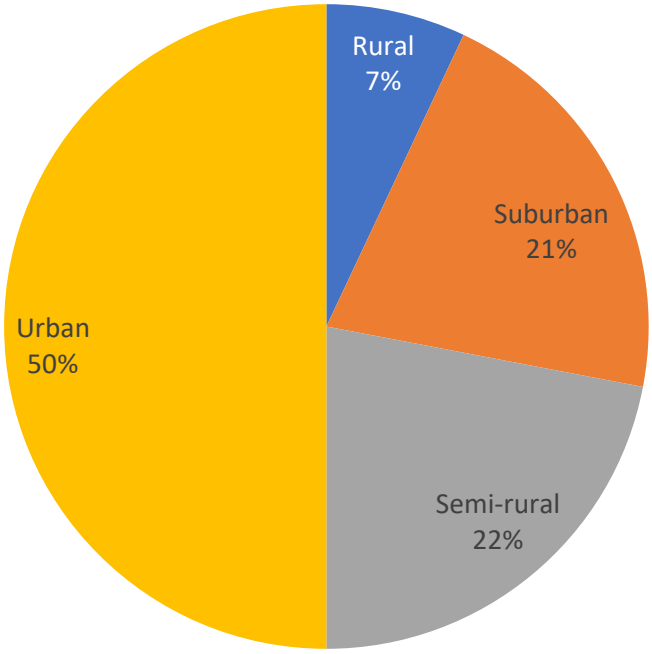
prosopographical work in chapter three manageable: the number of individuals — 467 — is a size that allowed an adequate depth of study. An overview of the returns in this study are listed in Table 1-1, p. 28. Of the 28 parishes considered in this study, in the date ranges 1802–23, 1834–38, and 1854–99, a total of 528 visitation returns out of a potential 559 survive (over 94%).[45] For the second half of the century only the 1863 responses are entirely missing; besides this lacuna there are only 11 missing returns. Considering that over 97% of all possible visitation returns are preserved, this study draws upon a uniquely complete resource. At every nineteenth-century visitation in Oxfordshire questions were asked concerning the clergy working in the parish, frequency of worship and religious instruction, frequency of

45 Although the visitation returns for 1831 are mostly complete for the diocese, every return for the city of Oxford and its surrounding parishes is missing.

Image 1-2 Oxford city parishes, 1900



Graph 1-1 Oxford and surrounding area: 28 parishes/districts



communion and numbers of communicants, and what hindrances or parochial concerns the officiating minister might have. Questions on the number of Roman Catholics living in the parish were included 1802–23 and 1872–78; number of dissenters 1802–34, 1854–72, and 1878–81; and number of absentee parishioners 1802–23 and 1872–78. Questions concerning congregation size were added from 1854 for the rest of the century, although from 1872 ministers were only asked to indicate the scale of any changes without having to provide a number.

There is evidence that bishops sometimes drew up queries in consultation with the clergy,[46] and several visitation returns include questions that only appeared

[46] Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xxi.

Table 1-1 The 528 visitation returns consulted in this thesis

Parish and number of returns		1802	1805	1808	1811	1814	1817	1820	1823	1834	1838	1848	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869	1872	1875	1878	1881	1884	1887	1890	1893	1896	1899
St Aldate	23						M	M																				
St Cross Holywell	23									M													M					
St Mary the Virgin Iffley	23									M																M		
St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	23										M						M											
St Mary the Virgin Oxford	22							M			M						M											
St Peters in the East	21				M	M		M			M																	
St Martin Carfax	20		M						M									M										
All Saints Oxford	15	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P																
Holy Trinity St Ebbe	15																											
St Paul	15										M																	
St Michael	14	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		M														
St John the Baptist Oxford	11	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P																
St Barnabas	10																											
St Peter-le-Bailey	25																											
St Ebbe	24																						M					
St Thomas	24			M																								
St Giles	24		M																									
St James Cowley	24																									M		
Iron Church Cowley St John	5																											
SS Mary and John Cowley St John	4																									M		
SS Philip and James	12																											
St Margaret	1																											
St Clement	25																											
St Frideswide New Osney	9																											
St Andrews Headington	25																											
Holy Trinity Headington Quarry	15																											
SS Mary and Nicholas Littlemore	15										M																	
St John the Baptist Summertown	16									M	M																	
St Margaret Binsey	22	M																M	M									
St Nicholas Marston	23				M					M																		
Total	**528**	**15**	**14**	**15**	**14**	**15**	**15**	**13**	**15**	**14**	**13**	**2**	**23**	**23**	**24**	**24**	**23**	**23**	**26**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**26**	**28**	**27**	**24**	**26**	**27**

M = missing; P = peculiar; Shading code: Urban Suburban Rural Semirural

once: examples include a question in 1854 on the accuracy of the 1851 Religious Census, and in 1875 a question on which hymn book was used for worship.

The benefits of capturing data from the returns of these parishes over many visitations within a relational database are demonstrated in this current study. The only comparable published work in English remains a pilot study of 177 parishes for a single year in Durham.[47] The returns for the city of Oxford and its surrounding parishes have the potential to provide a far more extensive longitudinal analysis.

In 1991 a research group of eleven members in Italy developed a database of pastoral returns for the diocese of Trent 1579–81. Achille C. Varzi, in a chapter on the group's methodology, noted the difficulties they encountered in its development.[48] Challenges included:

> … attempting to create a computer program by definition dependent on standardized language which could handle and make sense of the typical irregularities in the pastoral visits related to differences in the condition of the documents, palaeography, ecclesiastical Latin which may have been improperly learned, partial visits, or missing data.

Writing on computer methodology and pastoral records, Achille C. Varzi warned that the irregularity of the records and their linguistic variation turn the use of a computer database into a project often far too complex for the computing,

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47 Françoise Deconinck-Brossard, 'Historical Research and Relational Databases: a Case Study of the Durham 1774 Visitation Returns', *History and Computing,* 12/2 (2000). This article briefly considers issues of nonconformity and education, and aims to link clergy named in the 1774 visitation returns with a list of authors of published sermons that was printed 21 years previously, in 1753, but without success.

48 Achille C. Varzi, 'Elaborazione e interrogazione degli atti visitali: qualche spunto metodologico', in Cecilia Nubola and Angelo Turchini, (eds.), *Visite pastorali ed elaborazione dei dati: Esperienze e metodi* (Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 1993).

palaeographic, and linguistic skills of the typical historian.[49] Database development is a less specialized skill now than it was in the 1990s, but many of the issues raised in the 1991 project pertain, such that the database required to hold and manage data reliable enough to be of use demanded at the very least semi-professional expertise to build.[50]

Oxford and its surrounding parishes

In 1800 the city's urban area comprised the eight parishes of All Saints Oxford, St John the Baptist Oxford, St Mary Oxford, St Mary Magdalen, St Martin Carfax, St Michael, St Peter-le-Bailey, St Peter in the East, as well as parts of St Cross Holywell, St Aldate, St Thomas, and St Ebbe. Fanning out from this central conurbation, and starting at a north-west point and circling clockwise around it were, in 1800, the nine rural parishes of Binsey, St Giles, Marston, Headington, St Clement, Cowley, Iffley, and St Thomas. Littlemore, directly south of Cowley, was in 1800 a detached part of the parish of St Mary Oxford and so has been included, but the parish of North Hinksey, between Iffley and St Thomas, was almost entirely outside Oxfordshire and so has been excluded from this study.

By 1900 some boundary changes had taken place. In the city the number of parishes decreased: St John the Baptist was absorbed by St Peter in the East (1891), and St Martin Carfax became part of All Saints (1896). Littlemore became a parish in its

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49 Michelle M. Fontaine, *Catholic Historical Review,* 82/1 (1996) [review of Cecilia Nubola and Angelo Turchini (eds.), *Visite pastorali ed elaborazione dei dati: Esperienze e metodi*; and Cecilia Nubola, *Conoscere per governare: La diocesi di Trento nella visita pastorale di Ludovico Madruzzo (1579–1581)*].

50 For further detail on the database I developed in order to carry out the necessary research see Appendix 1: Database development, p. 416.

own right (1847; church consecrated 1836), and portions of the parish of St Giles were separated to form Summertown (1832), SS Philip and James (1862), and St Margaret (1896; church consecrated 1883). From parts of St Giles and St Thomas the district of St Paul (1831) was created, and then from that the chapelry of St Barnabas (1869). From the parish of Cowley, Cowley St John was formed: first as a chapelry (1875) and then as a parish (1882). Chapels of ease in St Ebbe (Holy Trinity, 1845), St Mary Magdalen (St George, 1849), St Thomas (St Frideswide, 1854, becoming a separate parish in 1872 with a new church building) and St Matthew Grandpont (from St Aldate, 1891) remained tightly administered by their mother churches, but the chapel of ease from Headington (Headington Quarry, 1849) was from its consecration sufficiently independent that it was treated as a parish in its own right. These changes meant that by 1900 the 21 parishes from a century earlier now numbered 28. By 1900 half of these were considered urban, with the other half a mixture of rural, semi-rural, and suburban.

As a set of coterminous units of land these parishes did not form a single civic or religious entity, and maps from the time reflect this, covering either just the urban parishes of the city, or extending more widely to depict the county of Oxfordshire and beyond. For many commentators, however, it was the city's rural parishes surrounding the city that provided the necessary setting to what might be meaningfully noted as 'Oxford'. The highest point overlooking Oxford, from Shotover Hill, rises to 171 metres, and all the modest summits that run, in a semi-circle, from behind Headington then south-west to Boar's Hill and Wytham, are beyond the boundary of this study. To a nineteenth-century observer standing on one of these summits the view provided 'an unparalleled prospect of magnificence and plenty; of

numerous spires, domes, and turrets, with the combined charms of verdure, water, and trees'.[51] It was a view thought to 'exceed those of any city in the British empire … [and] will find few rivals on the Continent'. [52] In this thesis it is not just the city but also most of its adjoining parishes that will be examined.

Bearing this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that the visual medium most consciously used to depict only the area specifically under review was not cartography but landscape painting. The more rural parishes were the necessary gateway through which travellers passed on their way to Oxford. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists mostly portrayed Oxford within a romanticist narrative that drew heavily on nostalgia for Oxford's venerated past. Paintings such as John Malchair's 1791 'Oxford from Shotover Hill' (Image 1-3),[53] and J.M.W. Turner's 1839 'Oxford from North Hinksey' (Image 1-4),[54] including agricultural labourers and dons as staffage, emphasised, as did many other paintings of Oxford, this picturesque vision. By the 1880s villages such as Iffley continued to act as an idyllic reminder of a time long lost: Iffley church was 'a sleepy, quiet place … that one might fancy it left behind and forgotten in the hurried march of nineteenth century civilization'.[55] If the surrounding countryside provided the setting for this visual idea of Oxford and its past, it was the University within the city that was its focus. In the nineteenth

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51 *The Universal British Directory*, vol. 4 (London: British Directory Office, 1793–1798), p. 112 [fasc. edn (King's Lynn: Michael Winton, 1993)].

52 'Oxfordshire: Oxford', in *Kelly's Directory of Berkshire, Bucks and Oxon.* (Kelly and Co.: London, 1899).

53 Colin Harrison, Susan Wollenberg, and Julian Munby, *John Malchair of Oxford: Artist and Musician* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1998), p. 124.

54 Colin Harrison, *Turner's Oxford* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2000), p. 94.

55 F.W. Grey, 'A Pilgrimage to Littlemore', *Merry England* (February 1888), pp. 609–17.

Image 1-3 John Malchair's, 'Oxford from Shotover Hill', (1791)



Image 1-4 J.M.W. Turner, 'Oxford from North Hinksey', (1839)



century, as it is today, the word 'Oxford' was practically a metonym for the University situated there, of which its buildings were the primary material expression.

> What really constitutes Oxford … is the magnificent collection of edifices, the museum, the labyrinth of great and noble and ancient buildings, which are connected immediately and remotely with its university — recent change or any touch of modernizing is all but utterly unknown. The whole city, in this view, is full of the noblest and most astonishing monuments of an ancient period, while everything modern is but an insignificant accessory.[56]

Oxford existed not just as a place but also as a physical manifestation of an idealized past, such that 'when the colleges and the Bodleian are lighted by electricity, when steam-launches trouble the placid waters of the silver Thames opposite Christchurch Meadows … civilization will have done its worst for Oxford'.[57] This was a viewpoint shared by enough University members to interfere directly with the city's development. Though to the Victorians the country's rail network formed part of a national expression of societal progress and modernity, at Oxford this development was consciously delayed. The city's closest train station initially terminated 10 miles south of Oxford, in part to hinder student access to the immoral influences of London,[58] and it was not until 1844 that Oxford had its own station.[59] But a 1860s agreement by the city council to have carriage works in North Oxford, with a possible influx of 7,000 working-class inhabitants, was resisted entirely. The perceived

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56 *History, Gazetteer and Directory of the County of Oxford: Comprising a General Survey* (Peterborough: Robert Gardner, 1852), p. 294.

57 'A Pilgrimage to Littlemore', *Merry England* (February 1888), pp. 609–17.

58 Mark C. Curthoys and C.J. Day, 'The Oxford of Mr Verdant Green', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 277.

59 Julian Munby, and others, *From Studium to Station: Rewley Abbey and Rewley Road Station, Oxford*, ed. Edward Biddulph and Ann Dodd (Oxford: Oxford Archaeology, 2007), p. 65.

negative impact such a change would have on 'the morality of the city' was certainly an issue, although in the words of one opponent 'the great argument is that Oxford turned into a semi-manufacturing town is no longer Oxford'.[60]

As will be seen in the rest of this study, University members exerted considerable influence over Oxford's nineteenth-century parochial religious life. The University, including its press, was one of Oxford's main employers, with staff forming 10% of the population in 1801, and steadily rising in number up to 1901.[61] It supported a large building industry and generated work for associated trades, including laundresses, errand boys, caddies, and grounds-boys, as well as bringing in students and dons who rented accommodation and required general domestic services.[62] Much of the work the University generated, however, was seasonal, and the University's summer vacation proved particularly onerous for many of the city's working classes, when a significant spending elite left town. Seasonal unemployment in the summer months was a feature of the local economy until at least 1939.[63] This was despite an increasing residential population in the second half of the nineteenth century, including a rising number of retirees, which led to more permanent demands for goods and services.[64]

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60 F., 'Oxford', *The Times* (7 June 1865), p. 6 [letter to the editor, signed from Christ Church, Oxford].

61 Malcom Graham, 'The Suburbs of Victorian Oxford: Growth in a Pre-Industrial City', doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1985, p. 16.

62 *ibid.*, p. 17; and James Nash, 'The New People of East Oxford: the Suburbanisation of Cowley, 1851–91', *Oxoniensia,* 63 (1998), p. 128.

63 Thomas Sharp, *Oxford Replanned* (London: Architectural Press, 1948), p. 61.

64 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', p. 17.

Despite this influence, linking Oxford's identity exclusively to the University is to ignore much of the day-to-day activity of the city. The 1840 tourist map of Oxford by Fisher[65] remains 'a masterpiece of "cartographic silences"': University colleges and halls, as well as the city's parish churches are marked, but entirely absent are the city's factories, shops, and houses. [66] Of the 2,594 electors on Oxford's 1865–66 voting register, 44% consisted of merchants, artisans, and others supporting themselves by daily manual labour. This was a significantly higher percentage than the average of English cities overall of 23%, but followed a pattern that can be found with other cathedral towns, including Lincoln (45.1%), Chester (43.4%), and Durham (39.3%). Within Oxford's electors, many of these working-class individuals were not enduring extreme poverty: 971 of them were inhabiting premises with an annual rent of between £7 and £10.[67]

Historically, Oxford had been an important town in its own right, with the city attracting a large number of apprentices to learn specialized crafts and trades. Excluding London, a 1781 parliamentary survey of inhabited houses listed Oxford the fourth most built-up, behind only Liverpool, Bristol, and Manchester.[68] Although Oxford did not experience such an extreme population increase as did many other urban centres of industrial development in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

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65 'A Pictorial Plan of the City and University of Oxford', repr. in Harrison, *Turner's Oxford*, p. 11.

66 Daniel MacCannell, *Oxford: Mapping the City* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2016), p. 158; MacCannell discusses an 1855 production of the map.

67 *Commons Sessional Papers 1866*, vol. 57, no. 170, *Return of Parliamentary Cities and Boroughs in England and Wales, arranged according to Proportion of Electors belonging to Working Classes on Register*, pp. 2, 5.

68 'Proceedings in the First Session of the Present Parliament', *Gentleman's Magazine,* 51 (1781), pp. 447–48.

century, that did not diminish its status. At George IV's coronation in 1821, for example, the mayor of Oxford, Herbert Parsons, together with his eight assistants robed in Corporation dress, were invited to join the Lord Mayor of London aboard the State barge as part of the royal procession to Westminster along the Thames. Following the coronation Parsons acted as 'Assistant Chief Butler to his Majesty', proffering a bowl of wine to the king, who replied that 'My good citizens of Oxford rank amongst my best friends'.[69]

Census returns from 1801 show that, with its recorded population of 11,921 people, Oxford had moved off the list of England's 30 most populous cities. Its population did rise, however; while the population of rural Oxfordshire was in decline in the second half of the nineteenth century, that of Oxford roughly doubled between 1841 and 1901 from 24,246 (15% of the county) to 49,336 (27% of the county).[70] This increase is entirely accounted for by growth in the city's satellite parishes, with an unbroken period of successive growth in the parishes of St Giles, St Thomas, and Cowley (Graph 1-2, p. 38). The city parishes of St Ebbe and St Aldate both included land that in 1800 was undeveloped but became densely populated over the course of the nineteenth century as those of low economic and social status were moved out into a circle of suburbs around an affluent, more thinly-populated city centre.[71] The

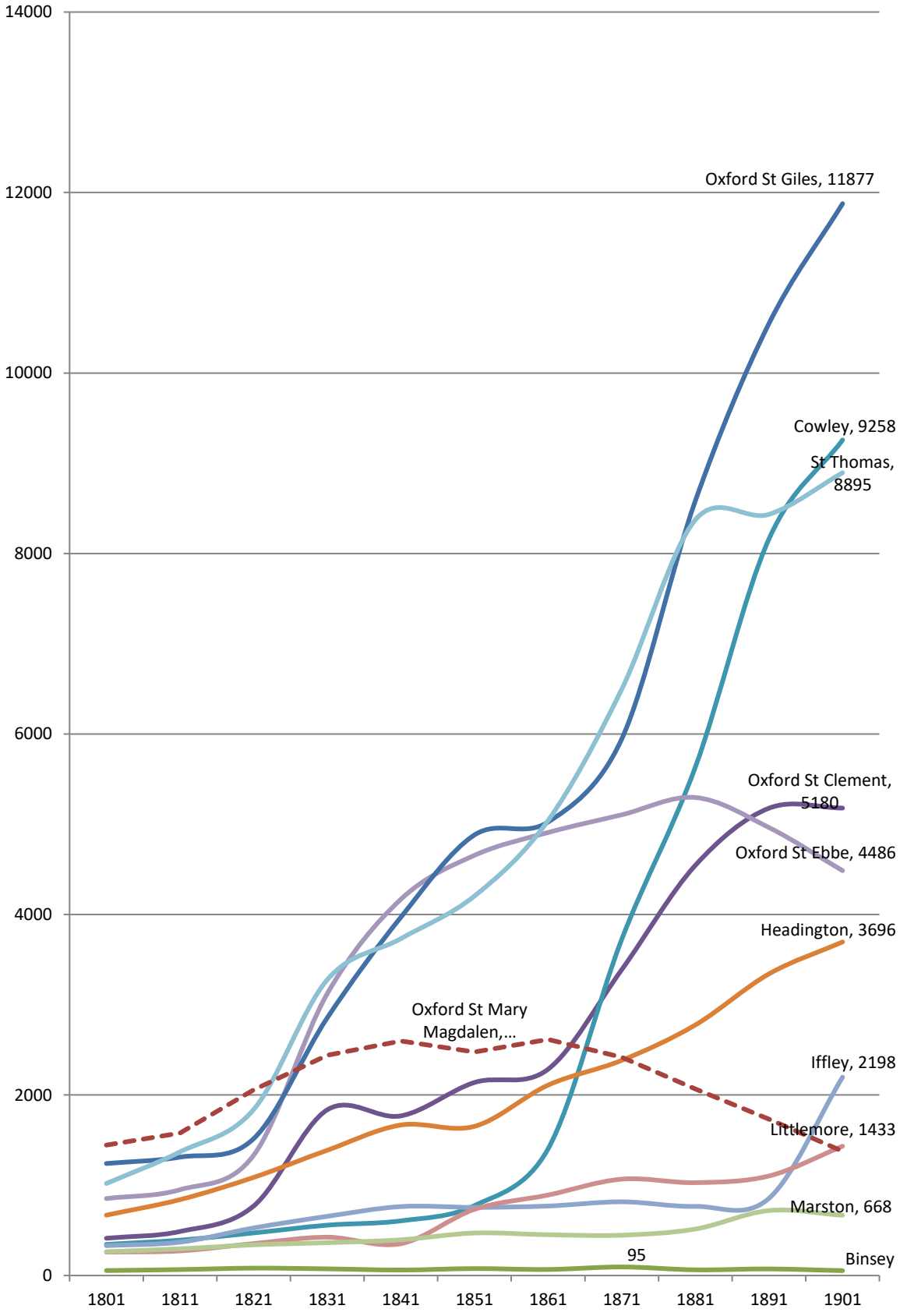
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69 'The Mayor of Oxford as Assistant Butler at the Sovereign Coronation', Bodl., MS. Top. Oxon. b. 116, July 1821; this was the final time the mayor was invited to perform this long-established rite, with the role of butler to the king dispensed with in 1831; for details see 'The Coronation', *JOJ* (3 September 1831), p. 4.

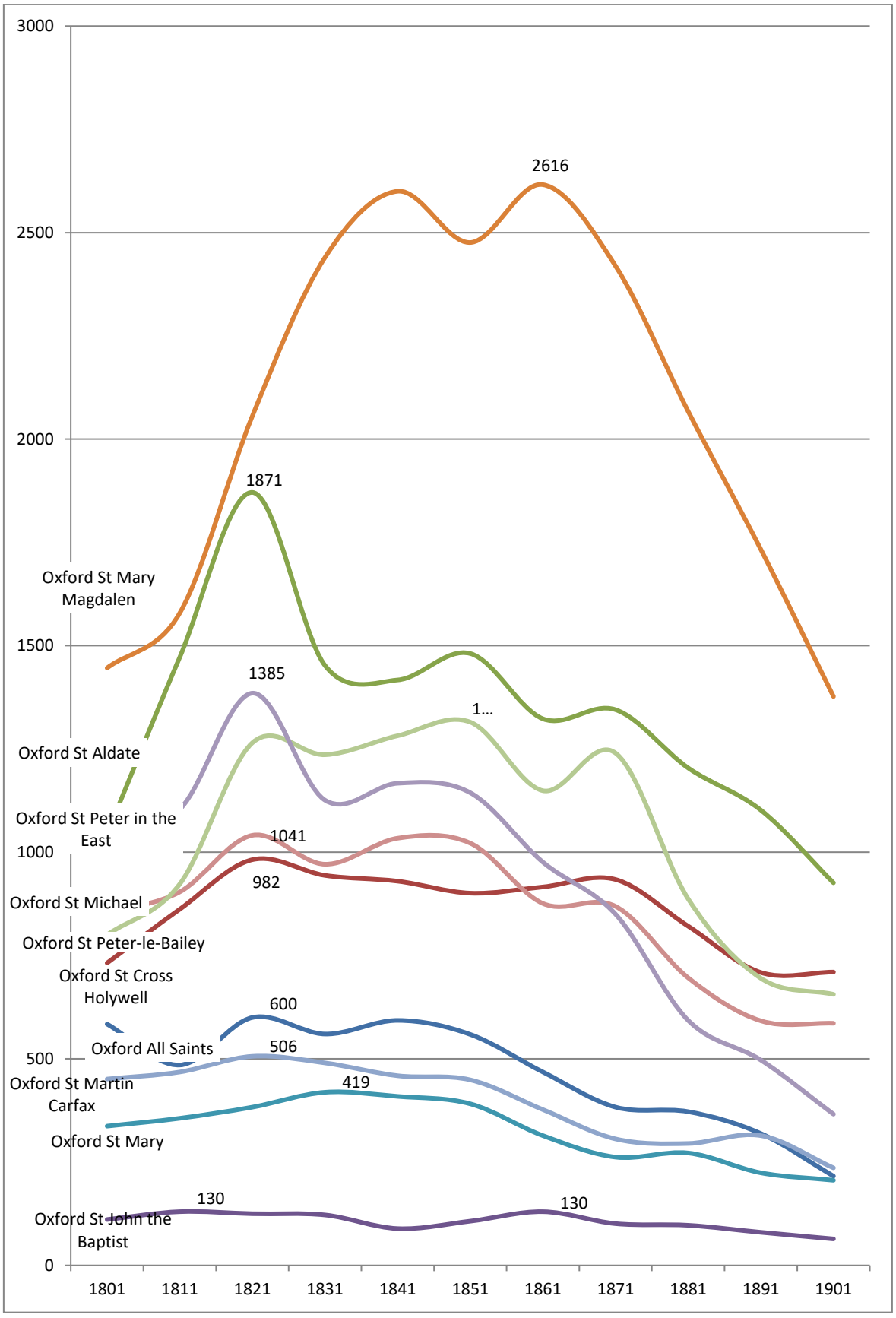
70 Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 2010), pp. 136–39.

71 R.J. Morris, 'The Friars and Paradise: an Essay in the Building History of Oxford, 1801–1861', *Oxoniensia,* 36 (1971), p. 75.

Graph 1-2 Population increase by parish, 1801–1901 (with the parish of Mary Magdalen from Graph 1-3 added for scale)



Graph 1-3 Population decline by parish, 1801–1901



potential sites for new buildings included a wide strip of land to the north in the parish of St Giles, a triangular area fanning out to the south-east from St Clement and Cowley, the hills up to Headington, and two narrower strips in New Hinksey to the south and St Thomas to the east.

As the University replaced densely populated housing with its own building projects the central parishes declined in population. This pattern of population displacement was to be a common urban development by the end of the nineteenth century,[72] with Oxford an early precedent. As can be seen in Graph 1-3 , the population of most of the central city parishes peaked in the 1820s. Even the dramatic mid-century rise of population in St Mary Magdalen had by 1901 dropped to 1,377 people, 69 fewer than in 1801.[73]

The city of Oxford had been established on a terrace of sand and gravel that extended north from beyond the city's medieval boundaries all the way to the northern border of the parish of St Giles. Its gentle northern elevation helped aid drainage, providing a bed of dry land suitable for building development,[74] market gardens, and, in St Giles where the deposits were deep enough, pits for quarrying gravel. Over the course of the nineteenth century this land to the north of Oxford was recognized as a potentially good site for middle-class speculative development: produce from the

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72 Colin Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground: Urban Forms, Residential Structure, and the Social Construction of Space', in Martin Daunton, (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 436.

73 Some caution with these figures is needed, however, as from 1861 the census was taken during the Easter vacation; *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 4, p. 181.

74 C.W. Chalkin, *Provincial Towns: a Study of the Building Process, 1740–1820* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), p. 70. The population line of St Mary Magdalen has been added to Graph 1-2 to help visualize this.

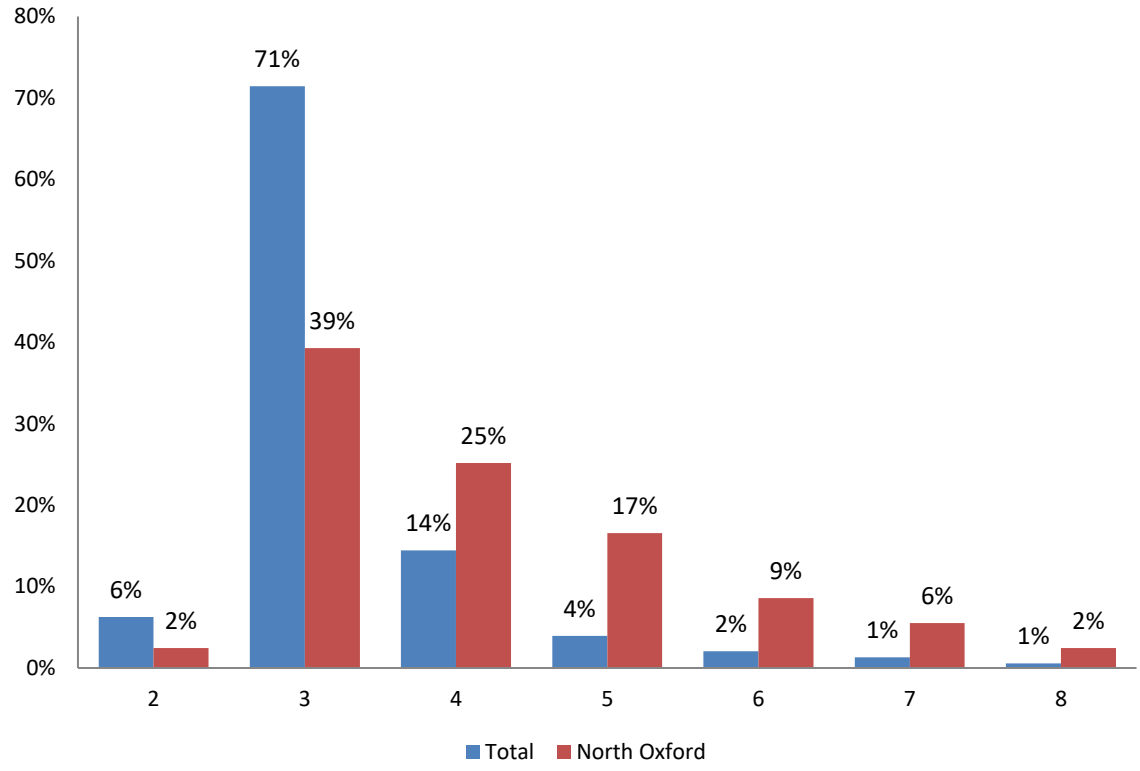
existing cornfields and market gardens, as well as the gravel that the land supplied to the city, could be cheaply imported by rail; it was a short commute from north Oxford to the city centre; and it did not pass poorer or unattractive districts along the way. The estate was owned almost entirely by St John's College, allowing it to control the building quality and ensure the villas were of suitably high status, as comparisons between domestic residences in North Oxford and the rest of Oxford's suburbs demonstrate in terms of better developed sanitary provision and larger houses with more bedrooms (Graph 1-4 and Graph 1-5).[75]

This northern terrace was encircled on the west, south and east sides with a lower-lying deposit of alluvium — a mix of clay, silt, and sand — that followed the path of the Thames and Cherwell rivers and was more prone to flooding and prohibitively expensive to drain.[76] The area encompassed from the west the extra-parochial Port Meadow floodplain as well as Binsey parish, and followed around the city's perimeter to include significant portions of the parishes of St Thomas, St Ebbe, and St Aldate. The vulnerability of the lower-situated parishes to flooding was 'painfully felt in poor people's houses',[77] and in extreme examples was severe enough for it to be reported, with illustrations, that 'the Cherwell and Isis are, in extent, more like seas than rivers' (see Image 1-5, p. 43).[78]

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75 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', p. 90; and Tanis Hinchcliffe, *North Oxford* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), chap. 4.
76 Morris, 'Friars and Paradise', p. 76.
77 'The Floods about Oxford', *OC* (25 December 1852), p. 5.
78 'The Inundation at Oxford', *Illustrated London News* (4 December 1852).

Graph 1-4 Number of bedrooms as a percentage, 1875–1900 (Malcom Graham, see n. 75)



Graph 1-5 Sanitary facilities as a percentage, 1875–1900 (Malcom Graham)

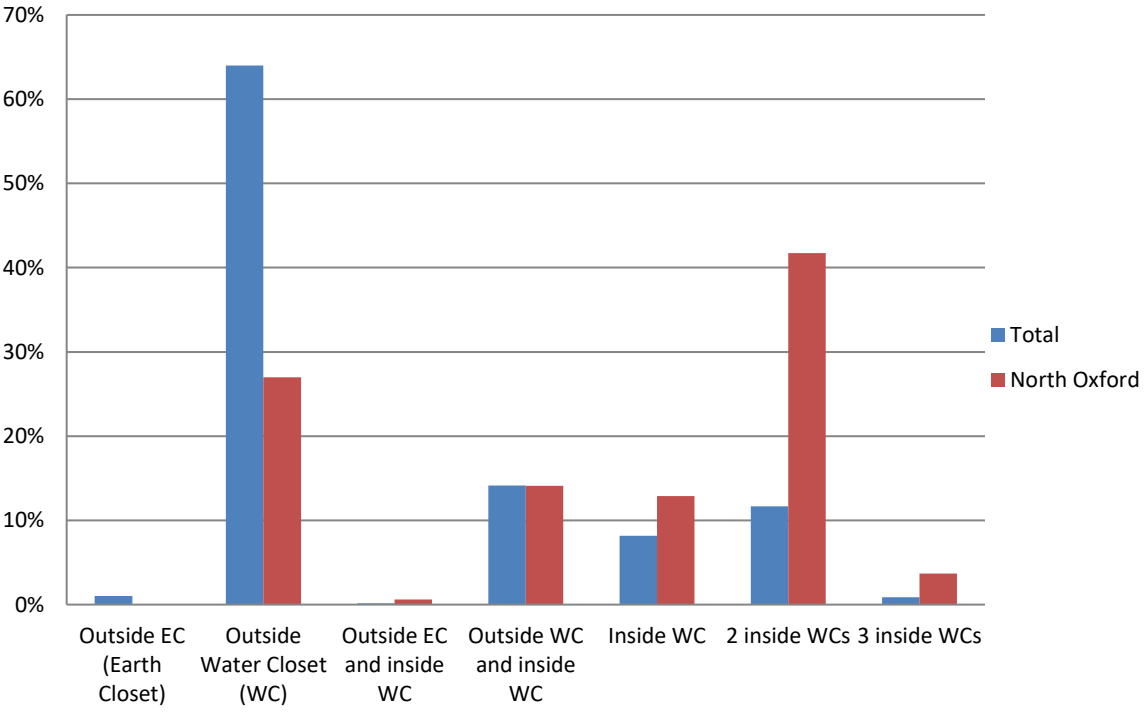
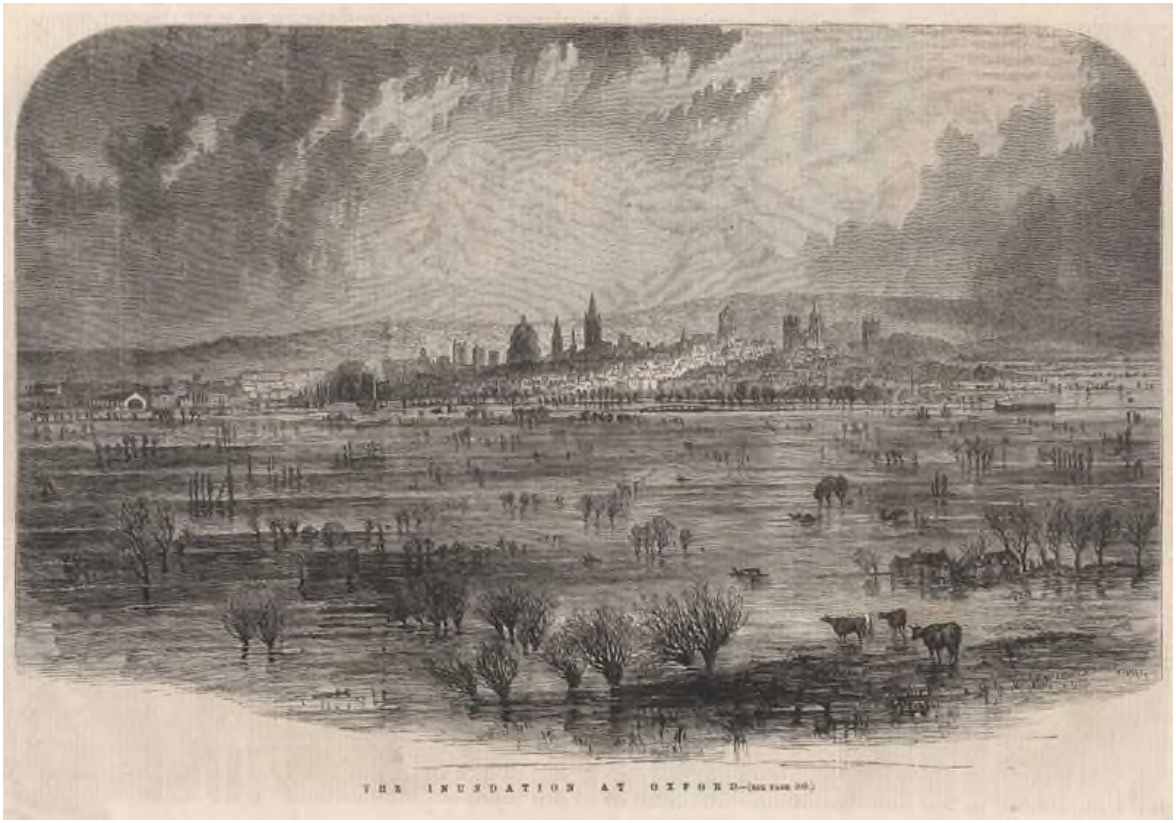


Image 1-5 'The inundation at Oxford' (1852)[79]



Blighted by poverty, Binsey was in 1800 too isolated to support anything other than a small farming community and perhaps the odd boatman.[80] Census returns from 1841 to 1901 show the parish remaining small and particularly impoverished. In the 1840s over half the working community were employed in agricultural work, but by 1901 it was unable to sustain more than a few agricultural labourers with other employment including boatbuilding, domestics, joiners, and a laundress.[81]

The city's poorer inhabitants were concentrated in the overcrowded parishes of St Ebbe and St Thomas. These low-lying parishes were much less desirable to the

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79 *ibid.*

80 Carl Boardman, 'Life in Binsey as Recorded in the Church Registers', in Lydia Carr, Russell Dewhurst, and Martin Henig, (eds.), *Binsey: Oxford's Holy Place: its Saint, Village, and People* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), p. 98.

81 Census returns, 1841 and 1901.

middle classes, and included pockets of densely packed cheaper accommodation. Their vulnerability to flooding increased the potential costs for development and attracted industry and low-quality housing.[82] By the middle of the century the difference in property value between St Ebbe and the city proper had become extreme: it was commented in 1853 that a house acquired for £9 in St Ebbe would sell for hundreds of pounds in the centre of town.[83] From the middle of the eighteenth century Oxford had a large number of poor, with the city population rising beyond what it could sustain in terms of employment,[84] but despite this Oxford was recognized as particularly attractive to vagrants[85] who were being driven out of rural areas by a declining demand for agricultural labour[86] and who were noted in increasing numbers from the middle half of the century.[87] In St Thomas this included its itinerant boating and barge communities,[88] the train stations from the 1840s, and an unusually high number of lodging houses that serviced Oxford's significant 'floating population'.[89]

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82 Malcom Graham, 'Housing Development on the Urban Fringe of Oxford, 1850–1914', *Oxoniensia,* 55 (1990), pp. 147–66.

83 'Oxford Board of Guardians: Important Meeting', *OC* (12 November 1853), p. 8.

84 Ruth Fasnacht, *A History of the City of Oxford. [With plates.]* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 142.

85 Liz Woolley, '"Disreputable Housing in a Disreputable Parish"? Common Lodging-Houses in St Thomas, Oxford, 1841–1901', *Midland History,* 35/2 (2010), p. 226.

86 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', p. 13.

87 Anti-Mendacity, 'Beggars in and Near Oxford', *OC* (8 November 1856), p. 5 [letter to the editor]; 'Street Beggars', *JOJ* (4 May 1861), p. 5 [letter to the editor]; Veritas, 'Street Beggars', *OT* (29 June 1867), p. 5 [letter to the editor]; 'A Church Army Labour Home for Oxford', *JOJ* (26 March 1892), p. 8.

88 Mary Prior, *Fisher Row: Fishermen, Bargemen, and Canal Boatmen in Oxford, 1500–1900* (Andover: Phillimore, 2011).

89 Woolley, 'Common Lodging-Houses in St Thomas', pp. 217, 221.

Until its development in the nineteenth century St Ebbe had been mostly gardens, but following an act of parliament that led to the construction of a gas plant in 1818[90] an 'extremely foetid odour'[91] from the works was noted, which rendered the surrounding local area undesirable. Nevertheless, by 1835 it was observed that its population was 'daily increasing',[92] with low-quality housing attracting residents unable to afford to live elsewhere. The crowded housing and impoverished occupants of these parishes led to unsanitary conditions. Ormerod's 1848 report strongly criticised the habitations in these two places: St Ebbe included 'courts of the very worst kind, and present in common a degree of neglect and filth rarely witnessed',[93] while running through St Thomas were 'drains full of decomposing matters, with sluggish streams of the foulest kind, and running though parts which suffer severely from disease'.[94]

It was these low-lying parishes, including also St Aldate and St Clement, that were the worst afflicted by cholera epidemics in Oxford in 1832, 1849, and 1854,[95] issues not adequately addressed until the city's main drainage scheme of 1873–80 ensured that sewage no longer emptied into the river.[96] At first even this did not manage to alleviate the smell of sewage on the streets, which was so bad in the poorer parts that

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90 *A Collection of the Local and Personal Acts, 1818*, vol. 2, *An Act for Lighting with Gas the University and City of Oxford, and the Suburbs of the said City*.

91 W.S., *OUH* (20 December 1817), p. 2 [letter to the editor].

92 James Ingram, *Memorials of Oxford*, vol. 3 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1837), St Ebbe section, p.16.

93 William Piers Ormerod, *On the Sanatory Condition of Oxford* (Oxford: T. Combe, 1848), p. 21.

94 *ibid.*, p. 44.

95 Henry W. Acland, *Memoir on the Cholera at Oxford, in the Year 1854: with Considerations Suggested by the Epidemic* (London: J. Churchill, 1856), p. 23.

96 Jessie Parfit, *The Health of a City: Oxford, 1770–1974* (Oxford: Amate Press, 1987), chap. 3.

in 1881 local policemen had to 'hold their noses, and quicken their pace till they get out of the infected area'.[97]

Further to the east lay Headington parish, and to the south the parishes of Cowley, Littlemore, and Iffley. These parishes rested on a bed of Corallian limestone and Oxford clay, with Headington rising to an elevation no higher than 100 metres. The stone was suitable to be quarried for building supplies and the clay could be kilned into bricks. Headington was too remote for middle-class families without personal transport and grew more slowly, attracting some wealthier people with substantial villas along the rise in Headington Hill, but remaining primarily a working-class area behind this in Headington itself and Headington Quarry,[98] with the main growth taking place in New Headington from 1860.[99] Headington village included a thin peopling of middle-class residents with some artisans, but the civic parish as a whole, including Headington Quarry, was primarily working class.

The narrower alluvial bed that followed the Cherwell River ran through Marston parish and parts of Holywell and St Peter in the East, turning into a mix of river deposits and mudstone that formed rich productive ground suitable for dairy farming. At the start of the century its unusually high poor rate — at six shillings more than double the average of the local area[100] — was an indication that its

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97 'Our Sanitary System', *JOJ* (16 July 1881), p. 5.

98 Edna Mason, 'Headington Quarry c. 1820–1860: a Study of a 19th-Century Open Village', *Oxoniensia,* 54 (1989), pp. 363–77.

99 Christopher Hibbert, (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Oxford*. pbk edn (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 166.

100 *House of Commons Papers*, (13) no. 175, *Abstract of Answers and Returns under Act for Procuring Returns Relative to Expense and Maintenance of Poor in England, pp. 400–01, 406–07*.

proximity to Oxford was not a direct economic benefit, but over the century its local economy improved, supplying city residents with milk and local produce. Over half this land was used for arable farming, and in Marston in particular the land remained a collection of small farm holdings mostly owned by parish residents. In the 1840s it was estimated that of the 300–500 prostitutes working in Oxford and its surrounding parishes more than 100 could be regularly counted in the evening near the city centre,[101] but Marston had a special reputation as a centre of prostitution and vice, with Bishop Wilberforce describing it 'a perfect Sodom for wickedness'.[102] As with St Thomas, itself notorious for its high level of local prostitution,[103] Marston's location just beyond the city boundary meant it lay outside the direct jurisdiction of University proctors, acting as a 'favourite if unsavoury retreat from the pursuing powers'.[104]

Extending beyond these wetter areas south and south east were the parishes of St Clement and Cowley, where the grounds turned into a mix of mudstone and clay fertile enough to support arable and pastoral farming. These agricultural parishes remained important contributors to the city's economy throughout the century, and its meat market was considered one of the finest in the country.[105] St Clement's concentration of public houses and other drinking establishments was a typical feature of a parish at the entrance to a city. Unlike north Oxford, no single landlord

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101 'Public Morals: Prostitution in Oxford', *Oxford Protestant Magazine,* 1/3 (1847), p. 111.
102 Wilberforce, *Diocese Books of Wilberforce*, p. 226.
103 Arthur J. Engel, '"Immoral Intentions": the University of Oxford and the Problem of Prostitution, 1827–1914', *Victorian Studies,* 23/1 (1979), p. 84.
104 Graham Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 72.
105 George P. Hester, *OT* (24 February 1866), p. 6 [letter to the editor]; Hester was the city's Town Clerk.

had overseen its development, resulting in an 'almost accidental coalescence of many separate estates',[106] with only a few slum areas and pockets of comparative wealth.[107] Its affordability and proximity to the city attracted a greater proportion of artisans and lower middle classes, although efforts to gentrify it by establishing a set of baths for gentlemen with an adjoining reading room 'supplied with morning and evening papers, and the most popular and interesting periodical and other publications'[108] ultimately failed, and was pulled down in 1877.

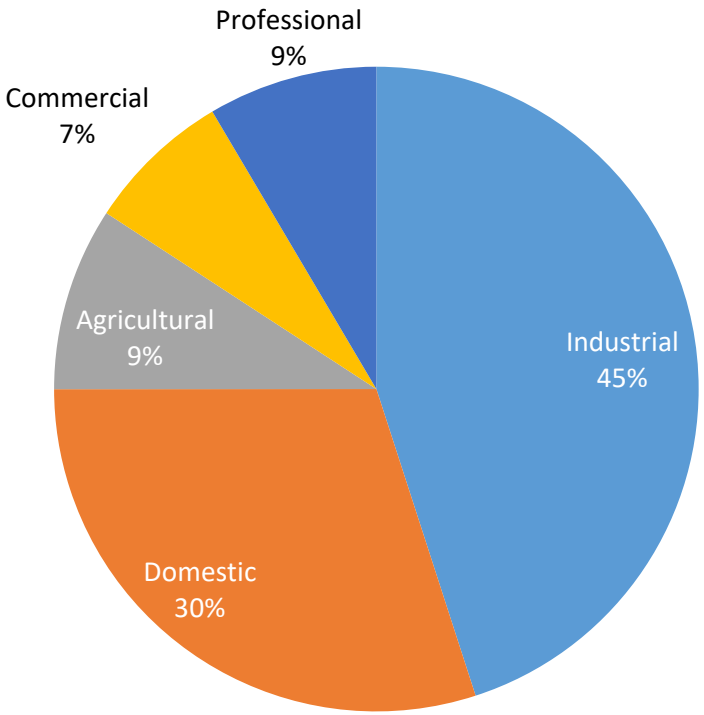
The 1851 census supplies a snapshot of how occupations were distributed parish by parish midway through the century. The 1851 census is important because it follows a more nuanced set of occupation codes, and is significant locally because the census returns that followed over the rest of the century were taken during a University vacation, and so omitted University data. Under the 1851 census, the data from colleges and halls were treated as extra parochial, and in this analysis these people have been grouped into a separate section labelled Oxford college and halls.[109]

What can be noted in Graph 1-6 is that even with the rural parishes included, by 1851 agricultural work constituted only 9% of total labour which was, unsurprisingly, focussed in the city's outlying areas.[110]

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106 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', p. 104.
107 *ibid.*, p. 81.
108 A.H. Richardson, *A Description of the Oxford Baths, and School of Natation* (Oxford: A.H. Richardson, 1830), p. 5.
109 For more details on the college chapel see chapter four, p. 246.
110 Figures in this section concerning the 1851 census have been calculated by myself. This was made possible by the assistance of the Chairman of the Oxfordshire Family History Society Wendy Archer, who kindly passed along to me a copy of their transcriptions in an editable format.

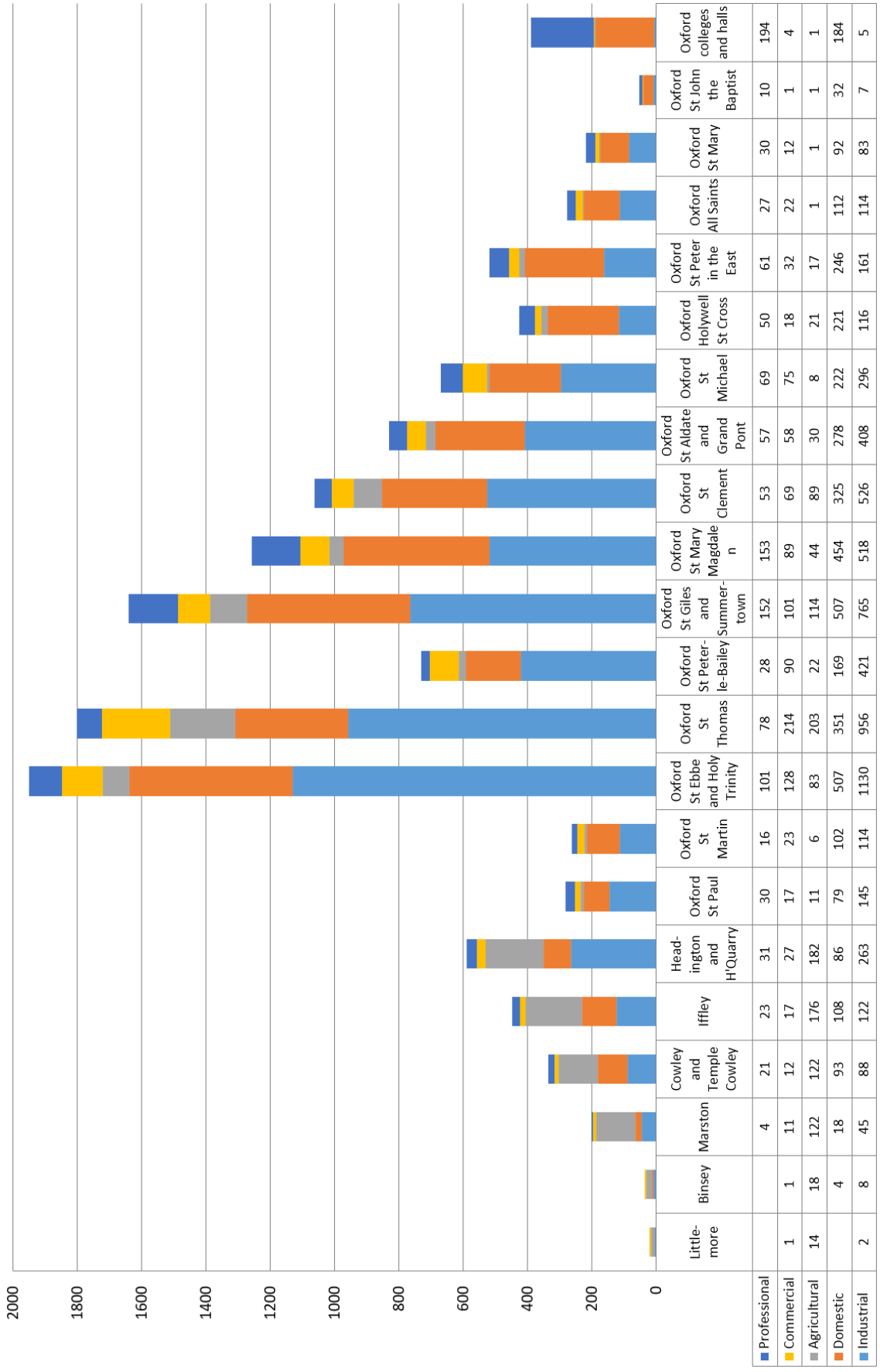
Graph 1-6 1851 census: occupation as a percentage in Oxford and surrounding parishes



Professional work, including all teaching staff at the University, constituted the same proportion: 9%. Commercial work, covering transport and the movement of all commercial goods, occupied a still smaller segment of local society: 7%. By far the two largest sections were domestic work (30%) and industrial labour (45%), which included artisans, shopkeepers, the manufacturing and building industry, food and lodging, and textile production and sales.

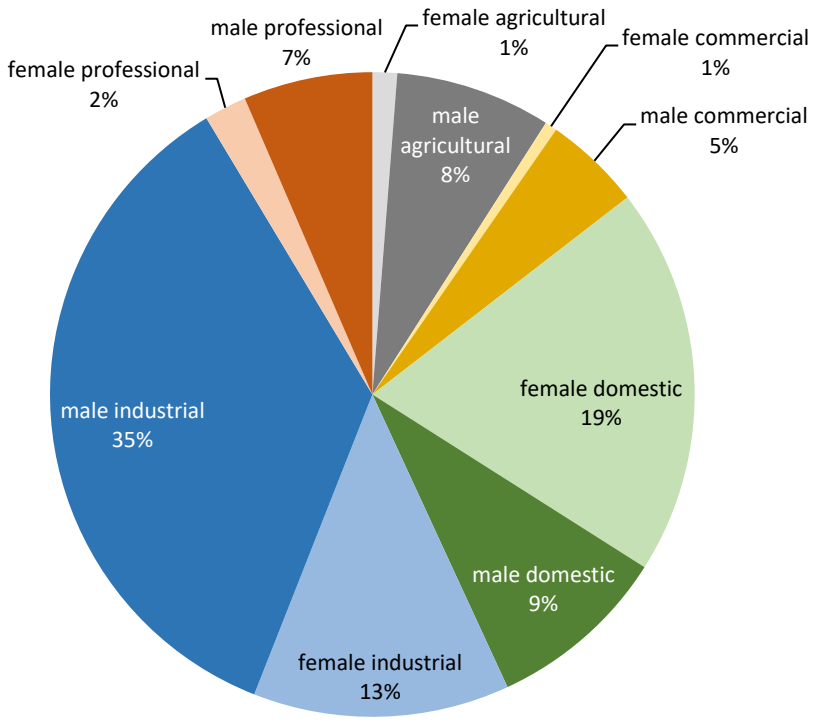
When reviewing occupation by parish (Graph 1-7, p. 50) the distribution of labour is very much as expected. The parishes with over 50% of residents engaged in industrial labour were all satellite parishes around the city: St Ebbe, St Peter-le-Bailey Oxford, St Thomas, St Paul and St Clement. Domestic workers were concentrated in inner city parishes: a remarkable 63% in St John the Baptist, and between 40% and 50% in St Peter in the East, St Mary Oxford, All Saints Oxford, and St Martin Carfax,

Graph 1-7 1851 census: occupation by parish, with University



	Little-more	Binsey	Marston	Cowley and Temple Cowley	Iffley	Head-ington and H'Quarry	Oxford St Paul	Oxford St Martin	Oxford St Ebbe and Holy Trinity	Oxford St Thomas	Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	Oxford St Giles and Summer-town	Oxford St Mary Magdalen	Oxford St Clement	Oxford St Aldate and Grand Pont	Oxford St Michael	Oxford Holywell St Cross	Oxford St Peter in the East	Oxford All Saints	Oxford St Mary	Oxford St John the Baptist	Oxford colleges and halls
Professional		4	21	23	31	30	16	101	78	28	152	153	53	57	69	50	61	27	30	10	194	
Commercial	1	1	11	12	17	27	17	23	128	214	90	101	89	69	58	75	18	32	22	12	1	4
Agricultural	14	18	122	122	176	182	11	6	83	203	22	114	44	89	30	8	21	17	1	1	1	1
Domestic		4	18	93	108	86	79	102	507	351	169	507	454	325	278	222	221	246	112	92	32	184
Industrial	2	8	45	88	122	263	145	114	1130	956	421	765	518	526	408	296	116	161	114	83	7	5

Graph 1-8 1851 census: occupation as a percentage by gender



and the slightly more distant St Cross Holywell with 52%. Agricultural labour was concentrated in the more rural parishes of Littlemore, Marston, Binsey, Iffley, Cowley and Headington, but with a fairly wide range: from 60% in Marston down to 30% in Headington. In all the other parishes agricultural related work was only a small factor, mostly below 5%. With 50% of people working in the professional sphere, the collection of colleges and halls held by far the greatest concentration of these sections, with the rest almost entirely housed in the inner city parishes of St John the Baptist (19%), St Mary (14%) and St Mary Magdalen (12%).

When broken down by gender (Graph 1-8, p. 51), 73% of industrial labour was male, while in domestic work 66% of the workers were female. Work by gender was also spread evenly through the parishes, again with the exception of the colleges and halls, which had a significantly higher male presence.

In summary, a strong degree of geographical determinism affected the social constitution of Oxford's suburbs. North Oxford developed into an affluent centre that attracted retirees, dons, and middle-class professionals and their domestic staff, while Cowley and St Thomas became more densely-populated working-class areas, with a concentration of artisans in Cowley.

The local topography limited the directions in which the city could grow, and the flood plains of the Thames and the Cherwell forced development into distinct, elongated districts and had a strong impact on the social and occupational structures within the parish. As a result, there existed within Oxford concentrated centres of different levels of class, education, and affluence, a condition that was observed to have intensified over the course of century, and was noted as a chief hindrance to church work in Oxford.[111]

The outlying estates around Oxford were owned almost entirely by institutions — primarily colleges of the University — far more than in most cities.[112] Generally speaking, these institutions could afford to take a long-term view of their investment; there was no urgent need of capital and they were in little hurry to develop the land.[113] When they did so Oxford's colleges were consistently attracted to higher quality housing which greatly increased the revertible value of a leasehold property.[114]

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111 Horace Evelyn Clayton, *The Spiritual Needs of Oxford: City and Rural Deanery* (Oxford: Bridge and Co., 1898), pp. 6, 16–17.
112 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', map 4 [final page of electronic copy].
113 Nash, 'New People of East Oxford', p. 128.
114 Graham, 'Suburbs of Victorian Oxford', pp. 19–55.

Conclusion

The potential of a book-length longitudinal study drawing upon visitation returns has not been adequately explored, especially for returns from the nineteenth century. Analysing the information in the returns with the assistance of a relational database has been contemplated and wished for, but not taken up. One objective of this thesis is to determine if such a study might produce useful data that can complement other scholarly research. The scope of the thesis has been carefully selected to provide enough data to consider long-term issues, but remain manageable enough to take into account local factors and individuals. Before considering the data, however, it is necessary to consider first the significance and function of the visitation, in order to contextualize and interpret the documents that were created as part of this Church institution. This will be done next, with a special focus on nineteenth-century Oxford.

2: The visitation and the parochial system

This chapter examines the institution of the visitation over the course of the nineteenth century, including aspects of how episcopal visitations were managed and received in the city of Oxford. It is argued that the episcopal visitation was important to the Church as a material expression of its spiritual responsibilities at national and local levels, and in particular as evinced by the physical presence of the bishop. The consensus among most Clergy was that in principle the visitation was a useful social and legal apparatus, and calls for its reform were generally articulated within that context. A nineteenth-century understanding that the visitation had been taking place in England for many centuries conferred further status on it as a convention that promoted the betterment of Church and society at large. In Oxford the episcopal visitation's engagement with Clergy and laity was widely covered by the local press, and by the middle of the century had become a closely followed triennial public event. Ecclesiastical visitation in nineteenth-century Oxfordshire had become a yearly or twice-yearly event at which churchwardens were formally

authorized to carry out their parochial duties by being officially accepted into their office by the diocese's archdeacon or chancellor in the presence of a registrar. The visitation also served as an archdeaconry court, and during session could, for example, grant probates of wills and letters of administration to the effects of a deceased.[1]

As well as these ecclesiastical visitations, every three years it was expected that the bishop would lead a grander episcopal visitation at which parish ministers, together with some of the laity, were either required or invited to attend. The bishop would follow a similar circuit to the archdeacon's visitations, stopping within designated districts or 'calls'. This created a route through the landscape that demarked ecclesiastical influence, punctuated by meetings at the larger economic centres within the diocesan boundaries. Along with their presentments, at each ecclesiastical visitation churchwardens were required to submit to their archdeacon answers to a set of questions concerning the parish. Similarly, at each episcopal visitation Clergy were required ahead of time to return answers to questions set by the bishop. It is these clergy visitation returns that form the basis of research for this thesis.

The parochial system

The fundamental context of the visitation returns was necessarily the parish: that is how all the visitation's answers were framed and structured. As such, it is an inherent quality of the returns that they reflect the parochial system of the Church, and any analysis of the responses within them must be undertaken in this context.

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1 See for example account in *JOJ* (1 June 1822), p. 3 [untitled column].

The system carried with it substantial provenance: most parishes were formed between the tenth and twelfth centuries as part of a wider effort by the Church to establish local influence,[2] and in the nineteenth-century denoted an intrinsic sense of 'Englishness'.

The parochial system presented a range of meanings to nineteenth-century Clergy: alongside the sense of marking a territory it also carried great moral, spiritual, and national significance. It was widely understood that the parish was a necessary segment of something much larger. The parish was a parcel of land, each piece part of a jigsaw that combined to form a deanery, an archdeaconry, a diocese, and, ultimately, the nation. It was in this sense that the jurisdiction of the Church constituted the entire realm of England.[3]

Within this hierarchical structure the foundational unit was the parishioner, an individual connected to the parish by living within it.[4] The parish boundary marked the termination of some of its minister's legal rights and duties, tacitly reinforcing the legitimacy of his authority within. The minister exercised specific rights over the parishioner, such as receiving a tithe, as well as taking on certain responsibilities. These primarily involved being the *cura animarum*, the curer of souls, and cultivating a bond that connected each parishioner to the Church through its ordinances and

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2 Nicholas Orme, *Going to Church in Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), p. 45.

3 Peculiars, mostly places with exempt jurisdiction, complicate this larger picture but should not eclipse it. Although most peculiars were abolished 1836–52 under the Ecclesiastical Commissioners Acts 1836 and 1850, the colleges and halls at Oxford were exempt and remained extra-parochial for all of the nineteenth century; for more details see Paul Barber, 'What is a Peculiar?', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal,* 3/16 (1995), pp. 299–312.

4 Royle, 'Parish Community', p. 8.

teachings, attendance at services, and participation at other appropriate events run by clergy and the laity. From the Church's perspective, when correctly executed the experience of living within the parochial system was fundamentally a religious one that provided the ideal social and religious context within which Christian ministry could be embodied and enacted.

The parochial system was 'by its very nature a territorial system',[5] and a main source of its strength and influence was that the parcel of land formed a concrete, material expression of the system itself.[6] The parish was not just a theory or an idea: it was an object that was walked over, built on, and lived in. For some Clergy the concept of 'territories' carried military connotations, and we find Oxford's parishes being perceived as 'detachments' or 'batteries' that exert cultural and religious influence over neighbouring parishes as part of a wider battle against a fallen world.[7]

More significantly, by the second half of the century this territorial aspect helped Clergy justify their ministry as being inclusive of all classes of society. There were no 'voids' in the parish: within it resided the wealthy and the poor, and the parish was how the Church comprehended society's ordering of class as part of a divinely-arranged world. This comprehensiveness was the 'true theory' of the system: it provided 'for the poor as well as the rich;[8] its provision for literally all parishioners

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5 Richard Assheton Cross, 'The Adaptation of the Parochial System and ... Towns', *CC* (1881), p. 191 [MP, South West Lancashire].

6 T. Salt, 'The Duty of the Church to Canal Populations', *CC* (1882), p. 251.

7 Peter Maurice, *Dr Macbride's Legacy, or, More about the Ritualism of Oxford Popery* (London: J.F. Shaw and Co., 1869), p. 146.

8 Richard Assheton Cross, 'Church Rates: What Scheme is Now Practicable?', *CC* (1861), p. 32 [MP for Preston]; Cecil Hook, 'The Parochial System: its Deficiencies, and How to Meet Them', *CC* (1891), p. 353 [vicar, Oswestry, formery vicar of All Souls, Leeds].

was identified as being rooted in its historical connection with common law.[9] The legal framework on which the system was defined meant that many Clergy felt that it operated at its best when connections were strong between Church and State,[10] a relationship subjected to considerable challenges over the nineteenth century. It was the totality of the parochial system, combined with its legal authority, that allowed the Church to describe itself as the National Church; remove the parochial system, some Clergy asserted, and the Church became a Protestant sect alongside other dissenting bodies.[11]

For Clergy, a defining feature of the parochial system had been that a church's communicants dwelt within that parish: this was what differentiated parishioners from congregation members. But in the churches under review the connection between a church's communicants and its parish was clearly undergoing change. In an urban setting, a person's parish church could be further from where they lived than a church in a neighbouring parish. This was common at St Clement, for example, where in 1834 the minister noted that 'some of the Parishioners near Magdalen Street frequently for communion attend St Peters'.[12]

It was not only convenience that induced people to attend a church in a different parish. In 1875 Frederick Metcalf reported that he was 'concerned since the practice of gadding about from one church to another sprang up in Oxford and it will be found

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9 Edward Herford, 'Means of Recovering the Alienated Classes: Free and Open Churches', *CC* (1862) [President, Manchester Statistical Society].
10 Rev. Dr. Bardsley, 'The Connection between Church and State', *CC* (1881), p. 170.
11 John Julius Hannah, 'The Adaptation of the Parochial System and ... Towns', *CC* (1881), p. 195.
12 VR 1834, St Clement.

that many, being no longer under the surveillance of our Clergymen, or by other Parishioners, go to church only irregularly.'[13] At All Saints the minister noted over several visitations from 1872 on that his congregation 'is not distinctly parochial',[14] and that the congregation comprised 'heterogeneous elements' because so many of the buildings in his parish were businesses whose owners lived elsewhere.[15] At St Mary Oxford in 1860, Drummond Case noted that it was difficult to tell parishioners from strangers. In 1881 he wrote that so many of his parishioners were non-resident that describing them as a congregation, rather than a parish, was more accurate.[16] At St Martin in 1860 Richard Hales wrote that the church's seating capacity was out of all proportion to the number of people living in the parish, and that the church filled only because of the many non-parishioners in attendance.[17] In 1884 at St Mary Magdalen the minister recorded that at least 41 regular communicants — 18 male and 23 female — did not live in the parish, and by 1896 the parochial system was no longer being observed.[18] These minsters, like at many others in city churches, interpreted the challenges of urban living as problematic for the parochial system in general.

In Oxford people who moved away from the city centre to new suburbs often continued to attend their church in the city. The relatively close proximity of suburbs to the city allowed people to continue with relationships and the familiarity of a

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13 VR 1875, St Michael.
14 VR 1872, All Saints.
15 VRs 1875, 1878, All Saints.
16 VRs 1860, 1881, St Mary Oxford.
17 Richard Cox Hales, '1860 Parochial Survey', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: questionnaire pasted into Samuel Wilberforce's 'Records of the Diocese'.
18 VRs 1884, 1896, St Mary Magdalen.

church style to which they had become accustomed. At St Giles in 1857 it was noted that many new parishioners moving into a parish from the city centre continued to worship at a church in town.[19] This 'church loyalty' was also reported in St Mary the Virgin,[20] St James Cowley,[21] the Iron Church,[22] and St Michael.[23] At SS Philip and James, people from outside the parish attending its services led to complaints that non-parishioners were arriving early and taking the best places before the parishioners could arrive.[24] In the first six months after the opening of the new church of St Frideswide, it was noted that the congregation comprised not only inhabitants of the district 'for which the Church has been built', but also 'strangers from all parts of the City'.[25] At St Barnabas in 1890 at least one half of the 600 people who communicated there at Easter were former parishioners who had 'moved to better houses elsewhere'.[26]

Within Anglicanism more generally and especially amongst its high-church Clergy, over the second half of the century a focus on cultivating a eucharistic community started to develop, primarily to reinforce a sense of allegiance to the Church from its more committed attendees.[27] Under Wilberforce a key strategy to achieve this was

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19 VR 1857, St Giles.
20 VR 1857, St Mary Oxford.
21 VR 1866, St James Cowley.
22 VR 1872, Iron Church.
23 VR 1896, St Michael.
24 'SS Phillip and James Church', *OT* (7 Oct 1882), p. 7 [letter to the editor; see also replies 14 October, p. 8; and 21 October, p. 8].
25 'St Frideswide's Church, Oxford', *JOJ* (27 April 1872), p. 6.
26 VR 1890, St Barnabas.
27 Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 36, 42, 54.

by maintaining communicants lists: how these were managed, alongside a later approach of establishing guilds, is discussed in chapter five.

In this light, it remained an ongoing challenge for churches in Oxford, as in other cities, to maintain a system of ecclesiastic precincts within an urban setting where parish boundaries were permeable and less visible. A clear effort to address this can be seen in the rising number of ministers who reinstated a tradition of annually processing along the parish's border. Markers put up in towns around this boundary were visual reminders to the parishioners of the boundaries of ecclesiastical authority. Very few in Oxford remain today: a rare example is the Victorian parish boundary marker in the form of a St Michael's cross delineating the parishes of St Peter in the East and St Mary Oxford on the plinth of a column of the Clarendon Building (Image 2-1[28]). But in 1870, for example, the parish of St Peter-le-Bailey

Image 2-1 Boundary marker on column plinth, Clarendon Building, Oxford



[28] Author's image.

maintained 24 boundary markers. Just as the parish boundary encircled residents of all classes, so the markers were affixed to places of both high and low status: from the wharf bridge, a wall of the diocesan registrar's office, to a window of Mr Brockington's cottage, and the privy behind Mr Taunt's house.[29]

On one day of the year these signs, and the boundary, functioned as more than a static reminder of the parish limits. They marked out the path along which residents could process as an embodied expression of the parish within which they lived. This event, known as the 'beating the bounds', had been a popular medieval custom celebrated at Rogation Tide, and helped inculcate residents with a physical sense of their parochial identity.[30] The general Victorian understanding was that the Reformation had seen an end to the great ceremonies that traditionally accompanied this event, but injunctions by Queen Elizabeth I had ensured the tradition had not been eradicated entirely and remained available for revival. On the origins of the medieval practice recent studies remain circumspect, but the Victorians thought the custom originated with the Romans as an annual festival called Terminalia and appropriated by the church, replacing its heathen ceremonies with prayers to God.[31]

Services on Rogation Days remained mostly neglected events, and their nineteenth-century revival, along with other special services, such as Harvest Thanksgivings and

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29 'Boundary Marks of the Parish of St Peter-le-Bailey', OHC, PAR 214/4/F1/138: printed circular, 1870.

30 David Fletcher, 'The Parish Boundary: a Social Phenomenon in Hanoverian England', *Rural History,* 14/2 (2003) and Steve Hindle, 'Beating the Bounds of the Parish: Order, Memory, and Identity in the English Local Community, *c*.1500–1700', in Michael Halvorson and Karen E. Spierling, (eds.), *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

31 For a local account on this see 'Local Observances No. 1: Ascension Day or Holy Thursday', *OT* (1 June 1867), p. 6.

Ember Days, was seen as a strategy to attract the urban working classes.[32] By the 1860s in Oxford, beating the bounds was gaining popularity, but Rogation Week was ill-suited at Oxford because it competed with items in the University calendar, including preparations for Commemoration. Instead, churches celebrated the beating of the bounds in the week after the end of the last full term of the academic year.[33] No longer a Rogation Day event, the 'time honoured custom of "beating the bounds"' was quite consciously revived by most of the Oxford parishes, with the ceremony usually following the important Easter vestry meetings, most often in May or early June.

On this day most shops in Oxford closed, an indication of its widespread popularity and degree of participation.[34] Proceedings were normally arranged by the parish council. The event was seen as especially suitable for young boys of the parish and was a way of teaching the children their parish boundaries and religious identity. Traditionally, peeled willow rods were distributed, and children, accompanied by clergymen, churchwardens, sexton, and other parishioners, would stop at various spots previously marked in chalk by the sexton, and strike the spot with their willow sticks, 'shouting lustily at the same time'.[35] For children the day might end with simple food such as buns and tea, or bread and cheese,[36] with perhaps a more substantial evening meal hosted by the churchwardens for the adults. For example as reported at St Martin Carfax, a party of 20 to 30, including the mayor, partook of

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32 John G. Talbot, 'The Best Means to be Adopted for the Recovery of Classes Alienated from the Church', *CC* (1876), p. 247.
33 VR 1881, St Paul.
34 'City and County News: Ascension Day', *OC* (1 June 1867), p. 8.
35 'Local Observances', *OT* (1 June 1867), p. 6.
36 'Beating the Bounds', *OT* (8 May 1869), p. 5.

dinner at a local hotel as a regular annual event;[37] at St Peter-le-Bailey dinner was provided at the Anchor Hotel.[38] In the parish of St Mary Oxford the party was entertained twice over the course of their walk: at All Souls' and Oriel colleges.[39] Being so small the parish of St Martin beat the bounds only once every three years, but had a tradition of providing cheese cakes for all the parishioners.[40] The expense incurred meant that by the 1860s the church stopped the custom for a time, although by 1867 the popular tradition was revived by the churchwardens, who covered the cost out of their own pockets.[41] In 1869 the procession for the parish of St Paul was headed by a drum and fife band from the local parish school, dressed in military uniform and playing military airs throughout the perambulation.[42] When the parish of Wolvercote beat the bounds for the first time in 1899, several neighbours, including Morrell on Woodstock Road, provided refreshments for the group.[43]

The meals and drink were for some considered to be a distraction from the religious significance of the day. In London beating the bounds had been moved from one of the Rogation Days to Ascension Day, and it was noted that the event had been 'stripped of all the religious character what [sic] once invested them', with very few shops closing for the day.[44] In this criticism some London Tractarian churches were singled out as being more reverential, providing well-attended communion services

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37 *ibid.* and 'Beating the Bounds', *OC* (23 May 1868), p. 5.
38 'Beating the Bounds', *OC* (23 May 1868), p. 5.
39 'Local Observances', *OT* (1 June 1867), p. 6.
40 *ibid.*.
41 *ibid.*.
42 'Beating the Bounds', *OT* (8 May 1869), p. 5.
43 'Wolvercote: Beating the Bounds', *JOJ* (13 May 1899), p. 8.
44 'From our London Correspondent', *OUH* (22 May 1852), p. 7; as an example of a well-attended church, at St Mary Magdalen on Munster Square in London, Pusey preached and over 400 took communion.

as part of their celebrations. It is likely that at Oxford a similar mix of approaches to this annual event took place. Kilvert's account of the beating of the bounds around St John the Baptist Oxford in 1876, noted that the march was peppered with laughter, included pranks and other interactions with University students, and had stops along the way for various refreshments, including a rest for bread, cheese, and ale from the Corpus buttery.[45] Nevertheless, the general tone of their perambulations was mostly reported quite differently from that of the annual walk around the city's Ridden boundary, a secular event performed annually throughout most of the nineteenth century, called 'walking (or riding) the franchise', and involved considerable drinking and 'high jinx'.[46] The deep cultural interest in the past meant that the notion of beating the bounds along a path 'marked from time immemorial' provided extra fascination for what was consistently reported to be an enjoyable occasion. For clergy these processions sacralized the parish,[47] by transforming religion into a more public and everyday experience.[48] It reminded parishioners of the boundaries of their parochial space and helped create shared recollections of their community.[49] For newly formed parishes, such as St Paul or the neighbouring parish of Wolvercote, the event provided a way for parishioners to align themselves with the pattern of

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45 Robert Francis Kilvert, *Kilvert's Diary, 1870–1879*, ed. William Plomer (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), pp. 314–15 [25 May 1876].

46 For one of many reports, see 'General Intelligence', *JOJ* (20 August 1892), p. 5; the first of many drinks was taken almost immediately after the beginning of the route: a glass of brandy alongside the memorial stone of a deceased city mayor, see George P. Hester, 'Map of the Franchises', OHC, Oxf. city arch. D.8.3, 1857, f. 7r., which includes detailed written directions.

47 Paul O'Leary, *Claiming the Streets: Processions and Urban Culture in South Wales c.1830–1880* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), chap. 6.

48 William Whyte, *Unlocking the Church: the Lost Secrets of Victorian Sacred Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 121.

49 K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity, and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 37–38.

older parishes and develop their parochial identity. Furthermore, over the course of the century there had been a growing perception that the usefulness of the local council was on the wane, and beating the bounds was interpreted by some as evidence that 'there is plenty of useful work to be done by practical men on parish councils'.[50]

Above all, the day reinforced the parochial system. Perambulating the parish boundary meant the parish limits were concretely realized by the bodies of some of its inhabitants: for a day the people became the markers of their parish, their bodies defining the parish's scope as they walked in celebration and good humour around its perimeter.

The visitation: history and reform

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth I and the accession of King James I in 1603, a conference at Hampton Court was convened by the king to resolve ecclesiastical differences between the puritans and the establishment. Before this time canon law — including statements concerning visitations — had been published in various articles, injunctions, and synodical acts, and Archbishop Bancroft used the conference to order the Church's canonical statements more methodically.[51] In the decades leading up to this event it seems episcopal visitation had been considered by most bishops a helpful practice that raised the prestige of the Church at the parochial

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50 'Wolvercote: Beating the Bounds', *JOJ* (13 May 1899), p. 8.

51 Most of the earlier papers concerning the visitation can be consulted in Walter Howard Frere and William McClure Kennedy, (eds.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910).

level.[52] For the archbishop and the convocation of Canterbury who passed the 141 canons in 1604,[53] the self-perceived shortcomings of their work might have further disconcerted them had they known that their results would not be formally revised until 1966, following a detailed review begun in 1947.[54] Throughout the nineteenth century there was a growing consensus that the 1603 canons were inadequate, especially the 'very unsatisfactory condition' of canons 31 to 76 concerning ministerial duties,[55] including the purpose of the visitation court stipulated by canon 60. Canon 60 advised, but did not require, the bishop to visit his diocese every one to three years and use the occasion to administer confirmation.[56] Surviving sixteenth- and seventeenth-century church records indicate that at least in a few parishes diocesan and archidiaconal visitations were undertaken regularly and diligently. [57]

In practice, the function and process of carrying out the visitations varied from one diocese to another, and custom and tradition played a large role in how the bishop's visitation responsibilities were carried out. This ambiguity and freedom of interpretation led to some bishops being criticised in their visitation duties.

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52 Gareth Owen, 'The Episcopal Visitation: its Limits and Limitations in Elizabethan London', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 11/2 (1960), p. 180.

53 Canons 142–44 were added much later: canon 142 in 1892 and canons 143 and 144 in the twentieth century.

54 Gerald Lewis Bray, 'Canon Law and the Anglican Church', in *The Anglican Canons, 1529–1947* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. liv–lv, lxi, and p. 258, n. 2.

55 'Revision of the Canons of 1603', *Church Quarterly Review,* 9 (1877), p. 71, including a further note that the canons were 'a half-despairing effort to stem the advancing tide of Puritanism'.

56 Gerald Lewis Bray, *The Anglican Canons, 1529–1947* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), p. 351.

57 David Loades, 'The Marian Episcopate', in Eamon Duffy and D.M. Loades, (eds.), *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 51.

There was within the Victorian Church a general understanding that its condition 'could only be known by its past history',[58] and the visitation's ancient precedents were frequently acknowledged, and widely appreciated.[59] The Victorian account of a seventh-century visitation was that it provided Archbishop Theodore the means to address successfully complaints regarding another bishop and the dilapidation of church buildings. This was sufficient evidence to the Victorian Clergy not only of the positive utility of the visitation and its early application to Church administration, but also its pedigree as a peculiarly English practice well-suited to the present-day Englishman's character and spirituality.[60] It was not despite of but rather because of its long pre-Reformation tradition that the visitation qualified for ongoing reform. 'The new can never come safely, except from and through the old':[61] the Victorian Church's inherent investment in its past meant that although the visitation was modified and adapted, it was never entirely jettisoned. It was too valuable and useful to forgo. As historian Arthur Burns explains, at the start of the century the visitation, more than any other institution, was a physical articulation of the relationship between the bishop and his diocese.[62] It regularly brought together the lower Clergy and lay workers with the bishop, and by the 1840s it had become central to managing

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58 J.J. Lias, 'Church and State: Discussion', *CC* (1889), p. 108.

59 See for example C. Wordsworth, 'Appendix D: Report on the Committee of the Lower House on Lay Cooperation', *CC* (1861), pp. 176–77 [reprint of a report originally presented 10 July 1857]; and *Command Papers 1883*, xxiv (321), *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Constitution and Working of the Ecclesiastical Courts, with Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence, Returns, Abstracts, Historical and other Appendices*, pp. xix–xxiii.

60 Augustus Jessop, 'History of Church Endowments and Property', *CC* (1885), p. 467.

61 Archdeacon Bickersteth, 'Diocesan Synods in Relation to Convocation and Parliament', *CC* (1885), p. 225.

62 Arthur Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, c. 1800–1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 22, and chap. 2 passim.

diocesan life.[63] Its development over the nineteenth century reflects in part the reforming nature of the diocese within which the event took place, and the Church at large. It is evident that the nineteenth-century bishops of Oxford took their responsibilities concerning triennial visitation seriously, as, for that matter, had Oxford bishops Potter and Secker in the eighteenth century.[64]

The nineteenth-century view of the Georgian church was often one of corruption and ineffectiveness. According to Mackarness (bishop of Oxford, 1870–88), the eighteenth century was 'a barren age, with little interest in religious questions, and few evidences of spiritual life'.[65] In that context, the perceived shortcomings of the eighteenth-century visitation fitted a widely-followed negative narrative, and much criticism of the visitation was viewed within that context. As noted by Jago:

> By the time that the Ecclesiastical Revenues Commission published its report in 1836, the immediately preceding years had been examined, and so had several decades before that, in a search for a convenient place to lay the blame; there seemed, however, no need to go as far back as the Reformation of the sixteenth century when the picture of the eighteenth century was readily available.[66]

In fact, while some eighteenth-century bishops did indeed ignore this duty, it is clear other Georgian bishops took their responsibility seriously and with much vigour, praying and fasting in the days leading up to the visitation, and taking on strenuous travel despite difficulties such as illness or old age.[67] The content of eighteenth-century charges depicted the 'energy, dedication, and professionalism of bishops,

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63 *ibid.*, p. 32.
64 Stephen John Charles Taylor, 'Church and State in England in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: the Newcastle Years, 1742–1762', doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1987, p. 126.
65 'The Bishop of Oxford's Triennial Visitation', *JOJ* (25 May 1878), p. 6.
66 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 15.
67 Phillip Tovey, *Anglican Confirmation, 1662–1820* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 111–12.

archdeacons, and their clergy'.[68] For some of the larger dioceses such as Lincoln and London, the visitation was the only administrative process that made it possible for bishops to monitor issues such as clergy and curate stipends, and unlicenced clergy.[69] Some eighteenth century visitation records already demonstrated the utility of providing a place where church dignitaries[70] and lay people[71] could meet, but these benefits were acknowledged more over the course of the nineteenth century.[72]

The repeal of the Test and Corporations Act in 1828, the 1829 Roman Catholic Emancipation Act, the Established Church Act of 1836, the Plurality Act of 1838, and the Dean and Chapter Act of 1840, combined with the 1832 Reform Act and the enthronement of a young queen in 1837, heralded a period of intense change that impacted Church issues for the remainder of the century. These main reforms are widely acknowledged in secondary source literature, but it is still easy to overlook the volume and multiplicity of parliamentary acts and bills in this era: between 1800 and 1850, 21 bills were considered tackling non-residency, clergy trading and holding of farms, and ensuring adequate provision of stipendiary curates. In that

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68 William Gibson, '"This Itching Ear'd Age": Visitation Sermons and Charges in the Eighteenth Century', in Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689–1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 299.

69 W.M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 65.

70 See for example Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xiv.

71 On the eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Robert M. Andrews, *Lay Activism and the High Church Movement of the Late Eighteenth Century: the Life and Thought of William Stevens, 1732–1807* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

72 Frances Knight, *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), chap. 2; for collections of papers promoting cooperation between Church and laity see for example Henry Hoare, *Hints on Lay Cooperation: a Collection of Documents Shewing how Cooperation of Clergy and Laity may be Conveniently Obtained* (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1858), esp. letter to Bishop of Oxford pp. 50–64; for collection in Church Congress reports see sections titled 'Authorized and Systematic Lay Agency' (1868), pp. 173–211; 'Lay Representation in Church Synods And Conferences' (1870), pp. 126–64; and 'Church Reform: Practical' (1896), pp. 180–208.

time 12 bills on improving glebe houses, and another 11 bills to reduce pluralities were also debated. Between 1808 and 1832 this push for religious and political reform was enhanced by the regular collection and publication of 20 different abstracts of diocesan returns.[73]

One significant aspect of the visitation that had by the beginning of the nineteenth century already waned was its disciplinary association with the laity, specifically concerning aspects of the churchwarden's historic responsibilities. A primary purpose of the visitation court had been for the churchwardens to bring to ecclesiastical notice any immoral or irreligious behaviour within their parish, including absenteeism from church. By the end of the seventeenth century a decline in the disciplinary authority of the Church, following the 1689 Toleration Act, led to the visitation gradually becoming less a judicial occasion and more an administrative event concerning parochial provision.[74] Following up immorality through litigation in the visitation courts of Oxford had all but ceased by 1760, being both difficult to implement as well as deeply unpopular.[75] In the neighbouring diocese of Winchester presentments submitted by churchwardens noting activity in need of correction were almost uniformly left blank by 1819.[76] Charles Clerke, archdeacon of Oxford 1830 to 1877, noted in his 1833 charge how different the archdeacon's visitations were in terms of use, finding it highly gratifying that:

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73 For an exhaustive list see *A General Index to the Sessional papers Printed by Order of the House of Lords ... 1801–1852* (London: HMSO, 1854), pp. 153–57.

74 Sheils, 'Bishops and their Dioceses: Reform of Visitation in the Anglican Church c.1680–c.1760', para. 2.; and Field, 'A Godly People?', p. 50.

75 William Marshall, *Church Life in Hereford and Oxford, 1660–1760: a Study of Two Sees* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2009), p. 73.

76 Hampshire Record Office, 21M65/B2: Churchwardens' presentments by parish, 1725–1819 [catalogue entry].

> … the advantage to be derived from these meetings [i.e. the visitation] arises from a far different quarter now … If originally the object in citing ecclesiastics, and all the tribes of officers connected with the Church, was to inquire — to correct morals — to reform habits — to admonish and to sentence those whose lives were evil — the present object must, not in courtesy but in justice, be described in other terms.[77]

Criticism of the continuation of this moral censuring aspect of the visitation in the first half of the nineteenth century suggests that in some dioceses the practice continued,[78] and there exists a very rare and late example of the visitation being used to censure a parishioner in Cowley in 1872, following an almost total breakdown of relationship between the local minister and the majority of his parishioners.[79] But aside from such unusual and isolated counter-examples, by the second half of the nineteenth century the convention had ceased. A review of the visitation by Oxford archdeacon Clerke dates the practice of censuring parishioners to 'the first phase of Diocesan Visitation' before 1603,[80] and a manual by Sumner at the end of the century concerning churchwarden's duties does not refer to it even in passing.[81]

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77 Charles Carr Clerke, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Oxford* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1833), p. 5.

78 See for example John Acaster, *The Church in Danger from Herself: or, The Causes of her Present Declining State Explained* (London: R.B. Seeley, 1829), pp. 158–59; in 1829 Acaster was minister at St Helen, York and authored several pamphlets concerning Church reform that were widely read and cited approvingly by other ministers, including dissenters: see for example *Nonconformity to Ecclesiastical Establishments: the Third Circular Letter of the Ministers and Delegates of the Congregational Union* (Westgate: J. and G. Vint, 1834), pp. 18–19; for an interesting contemporary nonconformist analysis of his text see *Eclectic Review,* 3rd ser., vol. 2 (1829), pp. 465–96 [review of Acaster, *The Church in Danger from Herself*]; for a much later reference see 'Church Extension: Discussion', *CC* (1861), p. 45.

79 VR 1872, Cowley; and James Coley, Bodl., G.A. Oxon c.9(1): letter to Mrs Merritt via third party, 28 January 1875, referring to the 1872 visitation.

80 Charles Carr Clerke, *The Archdeacon's Visitation: its Origin, its Use, and the Means of Upholding it: a Charge* (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1870), pp. 7–8; see also reference cited in n. 59.

81 George Henry Sumner, *Churchwardens' Manual: their Duties, Powers, Rights, and Privileges*, 3rd edn (London: Simpkin and Co., 1897).

Aside from its disciplinary functions, nineteenth-century disapproval of the visitation was mostly limited to its mismanagement, rather than the ideals of the institution itself. For John Acaster for example, writing in 1829, the visitations were so poorly managed it was enough to drive the local clergy to drink:

> But how these visitations are generally managed, and what evil rather than good is produced by them, is, I fear, but too obvious to need much explanation. Seldom do the bishops undertake these [episcopal] visitations in person; and almost as seldom in some dioceses is this the case with the archdeacon. … The little attention that can be shewn to the clergy, or opportunity afforded for communication with their diocesan, one of the great purposes of visitations, drives them to their inn for refreshment, and they return to their homes, lamenting all the way how grievously such important things are managed and perverted. … No wonder then that they are esteemed loathsome.[82]

For Acaster it was the bishop's absence that rendered the episcopal visitation pointless, and despite such an excoriating review, a well-run visitation was nevertheless one of the five points of reform he deemed necessary within the Church 'in order to render her efficient for the purpose intended',[83] and, more explicitly, to combat dissent.[84] Acaster was not alone in his critique of the visitation. In 1832 Lord Henley (Robert Henley Eden) wrote a widely-read set of proposals that carried considerable influence in Church and government circles,[85] and called for the

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82 Acaster, *Church in Danger*, pp. 157–58.

83 *ibid., chap. 4*.

84 Acaster's other four main points of reform were: addressing the ordination of unqualified clergy, not enough church services, non-residence of the clergy, and a lack of spiritual concern among the episcopacy.

85 Olive Johnson Brose, *Church and Parliament: the Reshaping of the Church of England, 1828–1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 124; and David R. Fisher, 'Eden, Hon. Robert Henley', in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1820–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) [online: http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/].

frequency of episcopal visitations to increase to yearly events as part of a wide programme of Church reform.[86]

For one churchwarden writing on his experience of the visitation in the 1850s and 60s, the negativism associated with the visitation was a consequence of the bishop being responsible for too many parishes, such that pragmatic solutions for managing the large number in attendance detracted from the main purpose of visitation, which was for the bishop to 'go amongst his people'.[87] With a roll call used as a substitute for meeting the churchwardens in person, his experience of episcopal visitations over a 25-year period stemmed from having been treated, alongside other fellow churchwardens, 'like a class of schoolboys … called upon to answer to their names'.[88] The result in his experience was that the bishop was alienating the laity by sending the false message that he was primarily an officer of the State, rather than being an approachable figure of the Church. Such negative encounters were noted by other churchwardens, especially the complaint that at visitations they were not consistently treated with the same respect as clergy.[89] But, despite this, the visitation remained respected as a means of potentially bringing together the Church hierarchy in a meaningful and helpful way.

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86 Lord [Robert Henley Eden] Henley, *A Plan of Church Reform*, 4th edn (London: Roake and Varty, 1832), pp. 76–77.

87 E. Carlyon, 'Importance of the Extension of the Episcopate for Work in Large Dioceses and Largely Populated Towns: Addresses', *CC* (1876), p. 61.

88 *ibid.*, p. 60.

89 Archdeacon Hamilton, 'Diocesan and Parochial Organization: Discussion', *CC* (1866), p. 139.

The principle of charging churchwardens a fee at visitation (formally a procuration) had been established within the 1603 canons,[90] and in Oxfordshire it was the payment of these fees, more than any other aspect of the visitation, that generated ill will, eventually escalating into organised protest. In some dioceses it is possible that a key motive for providing regular visitations was its usefulness in raising revenue.[91]

By the nineteenth century some dioceses had established a charge system documenting every component of the process with separate costs applied, which made it easier to protest specific costs rather than the fee in its entirety. By the mid-century at Oxford it was commonplace for the registrar to itemize every administrative step that preceded a visitation — preparing the papers, writing to notify clergy and churchwardens of the date, providing the questionnaire, receiving responses, filing these papers, attending on the day, filing various forms in the registry — with each step accruing an individual fee. In 1850 each process was charged between 1s and 2s/6d, and over the course of the 1850s and 1860s costs slowly rose, from between 8s and 13s in the early 1850s to a consistent £1/2s by the 1860s.[92] Episcopal visitations were even more expensive: £1/10s/6d in 1851, and £1/5s in 1863.[93] Although not as high as the £2 being charged in 1849 for archidiaconal visitations in the neighbouring archdeaconry of Berkshire,[94] the fees were sufficiently high to raise discontent.

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90 Bray, 'Canon Law and the Anglican Church', pp. 414–15.
91 Smith, *Doing the Duty*, p. lix.
92 See selection of invoices for Archdeacon visitations, OHC, PAR/10/F1.
93 Invoices for bishop's visitations, OHC, PAR/10/F1/12 and PAR/10/F1/14.
94 Churchwarden of the Archdeaconry of Berks, *Visitation Fees and their Arbitrary Character: a Few Words to the Churchwardens of the Diocese of Oxford* (London: Nichols and Son, 1859), p. 5.

These fees were expected to be covered by the churchwarden personally, and only a few parishes refunded any part of the expense. Another expense the churchwarden was expected to cover was the visitation meal. Burns writes that the custom of concluding the day's formalities with a meal was waning by the 1850s,[95] but, in Oxfordshire at least, this custom continued well into the 1880s.[96] In Oxford the requirement to pay these costs was making it difficult to find parishioners willing to be churchwardens at all,[97] a development that by the 1860s was observed in many other parishes in the county.[98]

Fees for the ecclesiastical visitations were in part to cover costs incurred by the archdeacon. Certainly when Clerke was appointed archdeacon of Oxfordshire in 1830 his annual income of £71[99] was entirely inadequate on its own to fund the living necessary to discharge his social responsibilities, which had grown considerably in terms of administrative and local duties since the start of the century, and included an expected generous disbursement to local charities and philanthropic endeavours.[100] The Oxford appointment fell into the category identified by critics such as Sydney Smith, who observed that such positions were only available to individuals with adequate private assets to support themselves, the alternative being

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95 Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, p. 35.

96 The meal was provided 'at a moderate charge'; see for example John Job Gardiner, OHC, PAR 207/10/L1/3: citation to the churchwardens of St Martin, Oxford from the Apparitor General, to attend visitation, 1885; numerous newspaper reports from the 1850s to 1870s mention an evening meal: see for example 'Chipping Norton', *JOJ* (19 June 1852).

97 A Church Reformer, 'Visitation Fees', *OC* (19 June 1869), p. 5 [letter to the editor].

98 A.R.A., 'Visitation Fees', *OC* (12 June 1869), p. 7 [letter to the editor].

99 This was minus deductions; see *Command Papers 1835*, (22) no. 67, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by His Majesty to Inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales*.

100 Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, p. 69.

that the Church become 'a generation of beggars'.[101] But within a decade there was an easing of this financial pressure on Clerke. An Act of Parliament passed in 1840 to ensure better funding for archdeaconries led to Charles Clerke being annexed a canonry of Christ Church.[102] Taking into account deductions for necessary expenses that included an annual £300 payment to the archdeacon of Buckingham, Clerke's salary rose substantially to between £900 and £1,000 a year.[103] Subsequently, with the position now so well remunerated, charging extortionate fees for visitations was seen as all the more unjustified.

In Oxfordshire the majority of protests against visitation fees, both ecclesiastic and episcopal, were led by dissenters. Dissenting protest against paying church rates, intensifying in the second quarter of the century and culminating in the 1868 Compulsory Church Rate Abolition, has been widely acknowledged;[104] the protest against visitation fees not at all. Indeed, incorporating a Eucharist service into the visitation ceremony was appreciated by some specifically because it acted as a 'formal Lay test' that would identify whether a churchwarden or some other individual was 'a *bona fide* Churchman'.[105] The convention in nearly all parishes was

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101 Sydney Smith, *Third Letter to Archdeacon Singleton*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839), p. 24.

102 *Parliamentary Papers 1839*, (30), *Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues: a Bill to Carry into Effect, with Certain Modifications, the Fourth Report of the Commissioners of Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues*, pp. 9–10.

103 *Parliamentary Papers 1860*, (613), *Archdeaconries: Return of the Offices Held by each Archdeacon of the Established Church in England*, p. 21; *Calendar of the Grants of Probate* lists his personal estate at death in 1878 as £35,000.

104 See for example Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 2: *The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. 476–85; see also Stewart J. Brown, *Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics, and Society in the United Kingdom, 1815–1914* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2008), p. 87.

105 W. Emery, 'Diocesan Organization', *CC* (1869), p. 33 [Archdeacon of Ely].

to have two churchwardens: one appointed by the minister and the other elected by the vestry. The vestry churchwarden might not be a regular church attendee, but perhaps a nonconformist, or even sometimes an individual with specific grievances against the church or its minister. In these instances resistance to paying visitation fees could escalate further. By 1852 complaints throughout the diocese concerning fees associated with the bishop's and archdeacon's visitation coalesced at Headington into organised protest. The Headington vestry included representation from Headington Quarry, which was dominated by an active Wesleyan congregation in need of a larger chapel to hold its growing congregation.[106] In 1852 it voted to establish a committee comprising churchwardens from other local parishes to question the legality and amount of the visitation charges.[107] The issue of legality was at this time unclear, but in 1858 it led to outright rebellion in Abingdon, where a prospective churchwarden refused to pay. Although informed that he could not be appointed, following correspondence with Wilberforce a surrogate witness was organized, resulting in the churchwarden holding the post there for several years.[108]

A refusal in the following year at Woodstock to pay the visitation fee was not resolved and left the parish without official churchwardens. The protest there was again driven by a nonconformist agenda. Mr Banbury, a dissenter with the strong support of the church vestry, was elected for a second time in 1860, alongside a motion to raise a voluntary rate to cover costs that concerned the whole parish and not just the

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106 VR 1854, and 1857, Headington Quarry; a Methodist chapel to accommodate its almost 500 members was opened in 1860: see Mason, 'Headington Quarry c. 1820–1860: a Study of a 19th-Century Open Village', p. 374.

107 'Visitation Fees', *OC* (17 April 1852), p. 4.

108 'Visitations Fees', *JOJ* (16 July 1870), p. 6 [letter to editor].

church, such as the maintenance of the church clock.[109] A reference in canon 116 that visitation fees should amount to no more than 4d had emboldened them to insist that this was the maximum that could be charged. Their meeting concluded in a militant tone encouraging other parishes to follow their lead:

> And now our question is, how shall we act for the future? For visitation time is coming round again, and visitation fees will be again demanded we may be sure. Shall we submit again to those illegal exactions, or shall we resist them? Let us manfully resist them by all the means in our power; yea more, let us as a parish believing those demands to be an unlawful imposition, set an example of resistance to other parishes around us. I should like for a voice to go forth from this meeting to every parish in this diocese, informing every ratepayer and every churchwarden, before the next visitation comes on, that those visitation fees beyond 4d are illegal — that Woodstock has refused to pay them, and that no attempt has been made to recover them, and that we mean to pay them no more.[110]

Under Wilberforce's leadership, the threat of widespread rebellion was by 1859 sufficient in the archdeaconry of Berkshire to bring the bishop, archdeacon, registrars, and apparitors to meet with churchwardens to discuss the issue. With Oxfordshire clergy also in attendance, looking on with interest to see what transpired, discussions revealed that the primary beneficiaries of the fees were the apparitors. The apparitor was the summoning officer for the visitation court who prepared and sent out citations to the churchwardens and clergy, and was usually paid one or two shillings;[111] it was established that these minor officers were pocketing an astonishing 27s for their modest contribution, compared with the archdeacon's 1s/6d.[112]

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109 'Woodstock: Visitation Fees', *OC* (21 April 1860), p. 8.

110 *ibid.*

111 'Shephard v. Payne ... 1862', *Common Bench Reports,* new series, vol. 12 (1865) [12 C.B. (N.S.) 413], pp. 414, 417; see also details on payments in 'Archdeacons' Visitation Fees', *Essex Standard* (27 November 1861), p. 2; and 'Archdeacons' Visitation Fees [continued]', *Essex Standard* (29 November 1861), p. 2.

112 A Churchwarden, 'Visitation Fees', *JOJ* (18 June 1859), p. 6.

Visitation fees in Oxfordshire were among the highest in the country, but resistance was not limited to this diocese alone. A churchwarden in Norwich refused to pay a visitation fee on the basis that the archdeacon did not conduct visitations in person, but billed them regardless. The Episcopal Consistorial Court in 1860 found in favour of the archdeacon on the basis that this had been the arrangement for 300 years, and was supported by modern practice, an outcome noted as 'extremely ridiculous' by *The Times*, and 'ludicrous' six months later by the *Oxford Chronicle* when the case came to appeal.[113] In London this issue, alongside other concerns, led to the Committee of London Churchwardens meeting over 30 times to finally formulate a proposed new act of parliament in which 'visitation and all other fees legally chargeable against churchwardens' could be covered under the Church rate.[114]

In 1862 an important legal challenge brought some clarity to the state of affairs. John Payne, churchwarden at Little Totham, was taken to court by registrars of the archdeaconry of Colchester following his refusal to pay visitation fees of 12s in the Easter and Michaelmas of 1858 and 1859. The court found that the fees were legally payable and reasonable in amount, largely because the registrars were able to produce 'the immemorial existence of the payment' including complete records of the fees being paid from 1727 on, and patchier records of visitation fees being taken as far back as Easter 1587.[115] An appeal in 1864 did not overturn this ruling,[116] but

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113 'Archdeacon's Visitation Fees', *The Times* (27 February 1860), p. 6; 'Archdeacon's Visitation Fees', *OC* (18 August 1860), p. 6; the appeal did not alter the original judgement.

114 Committee of London Churchwardens, 'London Churchwardens' Scheme', *CC* (1861), p. 38.

115 'Shephard v. Payne 1862'.

116 'Shephard and Another v. Payne and Another ... 1864', *Common Bench Reports,* new series, vol. 16 (1867) [16 C.B. (N.S.) 132].

following the Compulsory Church Rate Abolition Act in 1868 the Queen's Bench ruled that churchwardens did not have to pay fees if they could establish that they were without the means of obtaining funds.[117]

Parliament did finally take action, passing in 1870 a bill that capped fees for visitations at 18s, with the apparitor being eligible for no more than 3s/6d.[118] This parliamentary reform adequately addressed the concerns of churchwardens in Oxford, and protests against visitation fees ceased. The parliamentary bill meant the fee was indisputably legal, and its cap meant the arbitrary nature of the amount was limited, although some dioceses agreed to charge below the maximum.[119]

Along with extending the responsibilities of the archdeacon and re-establishing the title and duties of the rural dean, these reform efforts demonstrate how the Victorian Church responded to contemporary pressures and concerns by reviving ancient Church practices. Crucially, while the directions followed were taken primarily from canons produced during the Reformation, the traditions themselves predated these instructions by several centuries, allowing the Church to draw on its longer ecclesiastical narrative without weakening its all-important Reformation credentials.

Despite these criticisms, the visitation was mostly regarded positively: along with confirmation it was considered 'the highest order of the ministry'[120] and was

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117 'Veley v. Pertwee ... 1870', *Queen's Bench Division,* vol. 5 (1865) [LR 5 QB 573].

118 *House of Commons Papers, 1868–9*, vol. 47, no, 149, *Table of Ecclesiastical Fees settled in Pursuance of Act for Consecration of Churches and Churchyards*, p. 1.

119 In Hampshire and Surrey, for example, it was agreed in 1870 that visitation fees would not exceed 6s; see Sumner, *Churchwardens' Manual,* appx 5.

120 'Appendix A: Notes on the Hon. C. Lindsay's Article "The Increase of the Episcopate"', *CC* (1861), p. 166.

appreciated as an instrument promoting Church reform more widely, especially the Church's efforts to fortify its position in society through diocesan reform.[121]

Primarily, visitations were appreciated by clergy because of the opportunity they provided to meet with their bishop and receive 'the benefit of episcopal control, advice, and support'.[122] Regular contact through personal visitation was appreciated not just at home but also on the mission field as being far more effective than 'mere correspondence'.[123] It was the Church's 'most potent weapon' to promote and develop the clergy's professionalism.[124] Peculiars and other clergy outside the ecclesiastical order who were excluded from the visitation process reported regretting missing out on the advantages associated with regular episcopal contact and support.[125]

This interaction was also beneficial for the bishop, as keeping track of clergy and buildings within a large diocese was an enormous challenge and the visitation enabled him to maintain a sufficient degree of familiarity with his clergy. By the mid-nineteenth century bishops were responsible for a rising number of densely populated parishes, and with clergy spread over hundreds of miles keeping in touch was a logistical and administrative challenge. For the bishop of Oxford this became

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121 Burns, *Diocesan Revival,* esp. chaps. 2–4.

122 W.F. Hobson, 'The Church in the Army', *CC* (1862), p. 74.

123 Francis Hessey, 'The Supply of Ministers … for the Colonial and Missionary Church', *CC* (1863), p. 227 [citing a letter from Archbishop Shortland].

124 Paul Nicholls, 'The Social Expectations of Anglican Clergy in England and Australia, 1850–1910', doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1987, p. 23.

125 See for example the Principal Chaplain to the Forces at Aldershot noting that being summoned to visitations would 'be a help to us, making us feel that we were truly one with our brother clergy in civil life', see W.R. Beach, 'Spiritual Welfare of Soldiers and Sailors', *CC* (1885), p. 78.

more pronounced after 1836. In this year Berkshire was annexed to the diocese of Oxford; it was all Richard Bagot (bishop of Oxford, 1829–45) could do to stop the Ecclesiastical Commissioners including Buckinghamshire as well.[126] But with the elevation of Wilberforce to the see of Oxford in 1845 the parishes of Buckinghamshire, over 200 in number, were finally added, giving Wilberforce oversight of almost 500 parishes.[127] Although this made being available to clergy a challenge, by the 1860s around 500 parishes had become the average number for a bishop to oversee, resulting in several calls for an extension of the episcopate.[128] It was not only the bishop's relationship with clergy that suffered: writing as prebendary of Exeter before becoming bishop of Oxford, Mackarness complained that the size of the diocese meant the bishop's confirmation services became too large to be suitably meaningful for each candidate.[129] Wilberforce's organizational abilities were widely acknowledged and respected, and his administrative skill often noted as

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126 For correspondence between Bagot and the Commissioners see Parliamentary Papers 1851, (400), Ecclesiastical Commission; and Archbishoprics and Bishoprics: Return to two Addresses of the Honourable the House of Commons ... for Return of Gross and Net Income of Archbishops and Bishops in England and Wales, 1829–50, pp. 174–84.

127 Parish numbers in 1859 were 125 in Oxford, 159 in Berkshire, and 206 in Buckinghamshire. Figures taken from *Parliamentary Papers 1859*, iv (4-I), *Church Rates: a Return from each Parish within the Several Archdeaconries in England and Wales, Setting Forth the Gross Amount Expended during the Last Seven Years for Church Purposes*, p. vi.

128 'There are at present upwards of 13,000 parishes in England and Wales under the episcopal oversight of 27 bishops. This gives an average nearly 500 parishes to each Prelate …', see Colin Lindsay, 'Subdivision of Dioceses', *CC* (1861), p. 68; the issue remained a focus of reform for the remainder of the century, see for example A.J.B. Beresford Hope, 'The Increase of the Episcopate', *CC* (1862); Rev. Canon Kennaway, 'Increase of the Episcopate', *CC* (1864); Earl Nelson, and others, 'Importance of the Extension of the Episcopate for Work in Large Diocese and Largely Populated Towns', *CC* (1876) [various papers, addresses, and discussion]; Bishop of Southwell, and others, 'The Increase of the Episcopate, and the Organization of a New Diocese', *CC* (1886) [various papers, addresses, and discussion]; and G.A. Spottiswoode, and others, 'The Increase of the Episcopate', *CC* (1888) [various papers, addresses, and discussion].

129 John Fielder Mackarness, 'Increase of the Episcopate', *CC* (1864), pp. 20–21.

one of his main strengths as a bishop.[130] Key to this was knowing who his clergy were, and alongside maintaining a large scrapbook into which he pasted photographs of all the clergy in his diocese, organized alphabetically by parish,[131] meeting in person and putting faces to names would have been very important.

By the 1870s other forums such as diocesan conferences, ruridecanal meetings, and additional confirmation services, had for a few bishops rendered the visitation less useful for meeting clergy. Harold Browne, bishop of Winchester, described the visitation by 1876 as 'a thing of the past', a position he acknowledged was 'not in tune' with the majority view.[132] In Oxford by the second half of the century the ideal of the visitation as primarily an opportunity to meet with clergy had weakened, but the visitation had not been discarded. It had become instead a spectacle appreciated as a public, material expression of diocesan life promoting the Church's validity. This was partly because the event was not limited to clergy alone. As well as meeting with clergy, the visitation brought the bishop into contact with laity. As noted in the parish magazine for Holywell in 1875: 'in truth the Bishop visits not only the Clergy, nor the Churchwardens, but the *Diocese*; all therefore are personally interested in this event'.[133]

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130 P.G. Medd, 'Limits of Variations of Ritual: Addresses', *CC* (1881), p. 124.

131 Samuel Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860.

132 Harold Browne, 'Importance of the Extension of the Episcopate for Work in Large Diocese and Largely Populated Towns: Discussion', *CC* (1876), p. 70 [Bishop of Winchester].

133 'The Bishop's Visitation', *The Holywell Parish Magazine,* 1/1 (1875) [unnumbered p. following p. 84].

Indeed, bringing the bishop as chief pastor into contact with his flock had become central to what constituted a 'true visitation'.[134] It encapsulated the ideal of a bishop making himself available to everyone, 'to give audience to all, high and low, and poor, who may desire to consult with their chief pastor' and to attend to the 'complex machinery' that constituted the parish proper, including its schools and meeting the children who attended them.[135] The visitation helped humanize the bishop to his people, who could see him 'not as a mere dignitary dwelling in an indistinct haze of episcopal splendour, but as an active living agent … whose voice they may hear from time to time in the beloved walls of their parish church'.[136] By the first half of the nineteenth century the visitation had become an institution that strengthened the relationship between the bishop and his staff with the clergy and laymen in the parishes.

In the eyes of the Clergy, the gravitas and solemnity of the visitation helped legitimize the Church's status at the local level. This was achieved in part by ensuring that the visitation was a formal affair at which the bishop could display episcopal authority through administrative control of the parish elite via the visitation court that convened as part of the event. For example, in a letter to the parish of Oxfordshire in 1805, John Randolph (Bishop of Oxford 1799–07) required not only that the clergy return answers to his questions and be ready to present to his registrar 'the usual Exhibits', but that curates must apply for their license if required by presenting their nominations, testimonials, and letters of deacons. Clergy, parish-clerks, and school-

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134 John Philips Aldcot Bowers, 'The Church in Wales: Parochial Missions', *CC* (1889), p. 154.
135 Lindsay, 'Subdivision of Dioceses', p. 67.
136 W.J. Beamont, 'Clergy Discipline', *CC* (1863), p. 158.

masters were to exhibit their licenses, and incumbents and churchwardens were to draw up a terrier 'according to the subjoined form' and present a parchment copy to the bishop for his registry.[137] In addition Randolph also provided instructions on the issuing of tickets to people intending to be confirmed during 'this solemn ceremony',[138] an eighteenth-century innovation that helped ensure that the event was more orderly, and so more spiritually edifying.[139]

Marking out a circuit that passed through smaller villages and halting at larger market towns in the diocese, the visitation was a formal occasion that generated excitement and interest. The Oxfordshire visitations usually included a tour of four or five of the larger towns, and generally took place in the summer months when longer days and warmer weather made travelling easier. They were not always performed in a continuous run, and all the visits included confirmation services. For the Clergy and related people required to be in attendance from parishes situated on the outskirts of the county, significant travel would have been required. In Oxfordshire in 1814 the visitations for Bishop William Jackson took place on different weekdays over five weeks. His first stop was in the southwest of the county at Henley-on-Thames, on Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 May. He attended parishes around Oxford on Friday 3 June, but did not deliver confirmation there until Tuesday 28 June. Between these two dates he travelled to Woodstock on Monday 5 June, Deddington the next day, and Bicester on the Wednesday.[140] In 1823 the circuit of Edward Legge was performed within a shorter timeframe over three routes. His first

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137 VR 1805, Begbrooks [now Begbroke], ff. 2–3.
138 VR 1805, Begbrooks, f. 1.
139 Taylor, 'Church and State', pp. 126–27.
140 VR 1814, Holywell.

destination was Watlington on 26 May, followed by confirmations at Dorchester and Thame over the next two days. His visitation to Witney took place Saturday 31 May, and his third circuit, beginning Monday 2 June, included Burford, Bicester, Banbury and then Oxford on consecutive days, with visitations at Bicester and Oxford and confirmations at Burford and Banbury.[141]

The visitation circuit was a particularly visible opportunity for the bishop to mark out his episcopal authority across the diocesan landscape, and although Wilberforce found the travel tiring he considered the effort worthwhile.[142] The bishop, along with the members of the visitation court, would have made an impressive entrance into each town. When invited by Disraeli to lodge overnight at Hughenden during a visitation at High Wycombe, Wilberforce needed to forewarn his host of the inconvenience that would be involved:

> I shall gladly avail myself, if it is made with a full knowledge of what it is to receive a Bishop on visitation. For, imprimus, I come with my own horses for which, as essential to my progress, I must provide close to me; and secondly my chancellor Dr Phillimore and my chaplain Archdeacon Clerke are of my party: both very agreeable men, but still men and so occupiers of chairs and beds. I think it probable that my secretary Mr Burden will not be with me: but he constitutes also a part of my full 'tail.'[143]

There was no official liturgy for a visitation service, but by the 1850s a pattern had emerged that formed a cultural tradition of its own, albeit with minor local variations. For Wilberforce, these traditions were appreciated for adding solemnity to the event, and when meeting at Oxford Wilberforce ensured that all the visitation services were held at the cathedral where many of Oxford's elite from both city and University

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141 VR 1823, Holywell.

142 Standish Meacham, *Lord Bishop: the Life of Samuel Wilberforce, 1805–1873* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 125–28.

143 Letter to Disraeli, 22 Oct 1851, Hughenden MSS B.xxi, w.345, cf. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

would attend. Although the cathedral was to Wilberforce the most attractive setting for the public presentation of these ceremonial aspects of the day, it was unclear whether the authority of the bishop extended sufficiently to require the cathedral to host the event, and in 1860 the cathedral's chapter initially denied the bishop access to the cathedral, only acquiescing when it became clear no other suitable venue was available.[144] Wilberforce wrote forcefully, noting that he would make the request one last time before resorting to other means, to which the dean capitulated. It was consistently Wilberforce's preference to start the morning at the cathedral, itself situated within one of the largest of the University's colleges, and then to move to the town hall, emphasising to the public the connections that the church had with both the University and Oxford's secular leaders.

At the start of the century mention of the visitation in the local newspapers was usually nothing more than a short announcement of the dates, often published the month before the event itself,[145] but by mid-century the events were thoroughly covered by the local press.[146] As a general rule, the day would start with Morning Prayers at 10 am. Different elements of the service such as the commandments, the

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144 *ibid.*, p. 128. Tensions between the bishop and the cathedral continued with Stubbs. When Stubbs suggested moving the bishop's residence from Cuddesdon to Oxford the primary objection was the resultant proximity of the bishop to the cathedral: 'The Bishop of Oxford is not wanted in *that* Cathedral. It would be impolitic and not for the good of the University that he should eclipse the Dean in affairs, and worse more widely that the Dean should eclipse him'; letter from Edward Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Stubbs, 18 August 1888, William Stubbs, *Letters of William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, 1825–1901*, ed. William Holden Hutton (London: Archibald Constable, 1904), p. 294.

145 See for example 'City and County Intelligence', *JOJ* (14 May 1808), p. 3, and 'Oxford: Saturday, May 18', *JOJ* (18 May 1811), p. 3.

146 The following two paragraphs are mostly taken from the many press reports of these events as covered by *JOJ, OT, OUH* and *OC*.

epistle, and the gospel were read by different members of clergy, so including as many people as possible. At some point in the service a roll call was taken of clergy attending: attendance was always high, with absences rare enough to be reported. No sermon would be given: in its place the bishop would deliver his charge. Usually this was presented while he was seated on the bishop's throne, although a couple of times it is noted that he stood on the steps to the chancel. The actual business of the visitation usually followed the service in either the cathedral's chapter house or the town hall, where the visitation court would convene.[147] It was here that the churchwardens would receive their licence for the following year, and also where any judicial issues would be dealt with.

Following this the party would dine together. Both Burns and Knight have noted that by the second half of the nineteenth century the custom of concluding the visitation with a meal was being curtailed,[148] but there is no indication of this in Oxfordshire, where visitation dinners seem to have taken place both at Oxford and wherever the participants met throughout the county. One example of such an event in Oxford occurred in 1866 on a Monday in December. Following the business of the day over 100 clergy along with guests of the bishop dined in the town hall, including the bishops of Newfoundland and Illinois. The entertainment was led by Mr Wood, manciple of Balliol College[149] and wines were supplied by George Drinkwater, owner of the George Hotel.[150] The evening lasted so long that the bishop eventually excused

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147 For 1851 and 1857 the court met in the morning from 9 am, but this was unusual.

148 See Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, p. 35; and Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church,* p. 168, n. 68.

149 This was a senior position equivalent to the modern domestic bursar; see John Jones, *Balliol College: a History*, 2nd rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 136.

150 The George was one of Oxford's grander hotels, and situated on Cornmarket Street; Drinkwater supplied food and drink for several visitation dinners in Oxford.

himself, even as many loyal toasts and addresses proceeded, including a round of cheers for the United States president in deference to their guest the Bishop of Illinois.[151] The evening celebrations were enjoyed as social events that celebrated the diocesan and parochial connections between local clergy.

On his primary visitation Wilberforce noted with some regret that visitations had become very public events:

> I greatly lament the change which has gradually passed over these our diocesan gatherings. Excellent as in many respects is the working of that law of necessary publicity to which almost all action is now subjected, it is, undoubtedly, a great hindrance to taking counsel when it must be taken in public: and a Bishop's visitation would be another, and for his diocese, I believe, a far more effectual instrument of good, if he then spoke only to those immediately concerned with the matters as to which he speaks, and consulted with those only with whom he has to work. Such an institution, however, a visitation cannot now be.[152]

As much as Wilberforce might have regretted this change, he worked to adapt the event to ensure it remained a spectacle that engaged the public, arranging other days where clergy could meet in greater privacy at his bishop's residence in Cuddesdon,[153] while making an effort to visit as many parochial Sunday services as possible.[154] He used his Cuddesdon palace as an important diocesan hub from which he could carry out his work beyond the prying eyes and unwanted presence of others.

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151 'The Bishop of Oxford's Triennial Visitation', *JOJ* (8 Dec 1866), p. 6.

152 Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford at his Primary Visitation*, 2nd edn (London, 1848), pp. 10–11.

153 *ibid.*, p. 12.

154 In this commitment Wilberforce was particularly conscientious. He visited 216 churches between 1852 and 1854 (see Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge to the Diocese of Oxford, at his Third Visitation, November, 1854* (London, 1854), p. 2); and 289 churches between 1855 and 1857 (Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge Delivered at the Triennial Visitation of the Diocese, November 1857* (Oxford, 1857), p. 7).

For the bishops of Oxford who followed Wilberforce, Mackarness (1870–89) and Stubbs (1889–1901), the general structure and layout of the visitation day remained unchanged, albeit with shorter charges. Wilberforce's model of having private days with the clergy at Cuddesdon, however, were discontinued. Instead Mackarness set up a diocesan conference in Oxford, a synod that met annually in the Sheldonian theatre in Oxford.[155]

For Stubbs the idea of requiring clergy to travel en masse to the relatively remote village of Cuddesdon was unthinkable, reflecting a change in the demands he felt a bishop could reasonably impose on his clergy.[156] Stubbs remained at heart a University man, and in that sense aligned with Oxford bishops at the start of the century such as Charles Lloyd (bishop of Oxford 1827–29), whose episcopal duties were almost secondary in importance to his goal of reforming the teaching of theology at the University.[157] It was the distance from Oxford that Wilberforce valued at Cuddesdon, and when clergy visited him there he felt able to speak more freely and openly.[158] But Stubbs hated the isolation of his official residence, and tried, in vain, to sell it and move to what he regarded as the diocese's jewel: Oxford and its University.[159] Stubbs's episcopal duties precluded him from an Oxford professorship,

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155 The synod met annually, with the exception of 1883, when it was replaced by a Church congress at Reading, and the year of his resignation in 1888; see Charles Coleridge Mackarness, *Memorials of the Episcopate of John Fielder Mackarness, DD Bishop of Oxford from 1870 to 1888* (Oxford: James Parker, 1892), p. 15.

156 Stubbs, *Letters*, pp. 292–303.

157 William J. Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice: Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1784–1829* (Orono: University of Maine, 1981), pp. 152–54.

158 Wilberforce, *1848 Charge*, p. 11.

159 Stubbs, *Letters*, pp. 288–98.

but while bishop he did become a curator of the Bodleian Library, a delegate of the University press, and a member of the board of the faculty of modern history.[160]

The charge

The single most public product of the visitation was the dissemination of the charge delivered by the bishop. Wilberforce wrote to his son Hubert that 'a bishop's Charge is almost as fearful to him as a Regiment's charge is to it';[161] Mackarness also wrote of the anxiety associated with delivering his charges.[162] Traditionally, the charge was read out at each stopping point on the visitation circuit, necessitating multiple readings. Substantial summaries of the charges appeared in the local and national press, giving them immediate coverage, as well as advance notice to the clergy on what they were going to hear. Following the visitation, the charge might then be published in its entirety, often becoming a subject of public comment.[163] It was in this format that the visitation became a truly public occasion, and some of Bishop Bagot's Oxford charges were bestsellers.[164] Wilberforce's charges also enjoyed a broad readership, with even his critics acknowledging their substantial influence: Golightly, a particularly persistent detractor, observed that 'the charge of the Bishop

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160 J. Campbell, 'Stubbs, William', in *ODNB*, online edn [online edn, Oct 2005; accessed 20 May 2013].

161 Letter dated 18 Oct 1854, cf. Meacham, *Wilberforce*, pp. 125–26.

162 John Fielder Mackarness, *A Charge Delivered to the Diocese of Oxford at his Primary Visitation, April 16, 1872* (Oxford; London: J. Parker & Co., 1872), p. 3.

163 F.F. Goe, 'The Duty of the Christian Teacher with Regard to National Politics', *CC* (1884), p. 586 [rector, St George's Bloomsbury].

164 Burns, *Diocesan Revival,* p. 32, n. 37.

of Oxford for 1866 has become history'.[165] This interest in the charges from Oxford continued to the end of the century, with, for example, churchmen being encouraged to circulate Stubbs's fourth charge in book format 'to any man of influence in their neighbourhood' despite 'all its important parts' already appearing in the *Guardian*.[166]

Over the course of his time as bishop, the charges that Wilberforce delivered were written with their imminent publication in mind, accruing the paraphernalia primarily associated with print such as long footnotes and extensive appendices, and tabulating detailed statistical information and historical analysis. Furnishing published charges with extra evidence reflected a wider trend; the bishop of Rochester's 1881 primary visitation, for example, included a sophisticated pull-out map illustrating the rates of population increase in his diocese.[167]

Wilberforce's charges progressively lengthened, and it often took over four hours to read them out. In 1866 delivering the charge took all day: despite the service having started at 10 am, it was dark before Wilberforce could finish and he was required to pause while cathedral staff scrambled to arrange artificial lighting so that he could continue.[168] This was a long time for the clergy to sit and listen and took Wilberforce considerable effort to deliver, so much so that from 1866 Wilberforce decided to read

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165 'The Charge of the Bishop of Oxford in 1866, and Ritualism', *Christian Observer,* 351/March (1867), p. 169 [C.P. Golightly]; it is possible Wilberforce enjoyed the sometime notoriety that his Charges generated, with a report of a particularly scathing critique of his 1863 Charge being inserted into his personal 1864 copy of *ODC* (stored at OHC, SV Stack octavo (strongroom) 283).

166 'The Bishop of Oxford's Charge', *Church Quarterly Review,* 48 (1899), pp. 189–90.

167 Anthony W. Thorold, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Rochester, at his Primary Visitation in 1881* (London: John Murray, 1881).

168 'The Bishop of Oxford's Triennial Visitation', *JOJ* (8 Dec 1866), p. 6; although note that Wilberforce's final three visitations took place in December, when the days were shorter.

out his charge only once for each archdeaconry, and encouraged all the Oxfordshire clergy to travel to Oxford to hear it. Although less convenient for the clergy of more distant parishes, this ensured that, in Oxford at least, the visitation became a larger and more visible event. In 1869 Wilberforce moved to the bishopric of Winchester, and his decision to incorporate within his official departure a 'farewell visitation' turned the day into an even larger public occasion. There were, unusually, 'numerous ladies present', and, again abandoning the circuit through the diocese, he required the clergy to come to Oxford en masse.[169]

The content of the charges read at Oxford was usually split, often deliberately, into two parts: first national themes focussing on religious issues addressed in parliament and national controversies; and second updates and reflections on parochial activity within the Oxford diocese. This reflected an intrinsic dichotomy in the nineteenth-century Church: its role on the national stage as the church of the State, but also its discrete, local existence at the parish level. Burns identifies this division of the charge as an innovation that became widespread in the 1830s and 40s,[170] but in Oxford at least it was the format adopted from the beginning of the century. Randolph opened his 1805 charge with an explicit acknowledgement that, as with his 1802 address, he was covering two 'topicks … not only the performance of our proper Professional Duties, but in the publick also and political transactions of the day'.[171] At Oxford the

169 'The Bishop of Oxford's Farewell Charge', *JOJ* (13 Nov 1869), p. 8.
170 Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, pp. 29, 31.
171 John Randolph, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford* (Oxford: University Press, 1805), p. 3.

format was consistently followed throughout the century: [172] Mackarness noted the value of maintaining this approach, since he believed that addressing contemporary polemics helped assuage anxieties and promoted brotherly union and cooperation.[173] His 1875 charge was described in the *Holywell Parish Magazine* as a 'grave, wide, dignified, fatherly address'.[174]

Visitation queries

From at least the middle of the sixteenth century, the common practice among bishops and archdeacons when conducting their visitation was to present a series of questions, usually called articles, to the churchwardens. The churchwardens were by custom required either to submit responses on the same day or a few days later.[175] The lists of questions were generally longer than their nineteenth-century counterparts. They focussed 'obsessively' on the ordering to religious practice as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer,[176] and at the time were acknowledged as central to maintaining effective ecclesiastical government.[177]

The practice of sending out questionnaires as a research method had, by the close of the seventeenth century, become well established among antiquarian historians. The

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172 An exception is Bagot's 1842 address, where local and national religious controversy had converged, and as a result his charge followed a format often used elsewhere, that of the serial essay.

173 'The Bishop of Oxford's Triennial Visitation', *JOJ* (25 May 1878), p. 6.

174 'The Bishop of Oxford's Recent Charge', *Holywell Parish Magazine,* 1/5 (1875), p. 176.

175 Ronald A. Marchant, *The Church Under the Law: Justice, Administration and Discipline in the Diocese of York, 1560–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 115.

176 Hannah Cleugh, 'Teaching in Praying Words? Worship and Theology in the Early Modern English Parish', in Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie, (eds.), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 11–12.

177 Kenneth Fincham, (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, vol. 1 (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 1994), p. xiv.

earliest known printed questionnaire directed specifically at the unit of the parish dates from 1677, when Oxford scholar Thomas Machell sent out four pages of detailed questions covering natural history, together with facets of parochial culture and society.[178] The first instance of a bishop issuing questions in advance of visitation dates from eighteenth-century Lincoln, when bishops Wake in 1706 and Gibson in 1718 sent out questionnaires to their clergy.[179] They asked for information on the value of the living, the parish's patronage and endowments, a profile on the parishioners (total population, details on landowners and any 'person of quality') and dissenters (their denomination, numbers, and meeting houses).[180] The focus was on recording details of ecclesiastical aspects of parish life, and not infractions by parishioners on church law.

The earliest Oxfordshire visitation returns that survive are from 1738, in which Bishop Secker set down 12 questions similar to those of Wake and Gibson, but requesting more detail, and including questions on the minister's residence, worship arrangements, and the schooling of children.[181] The questions from 1803 to 1834 remained mostly the same, covering the population of the parish, church attendance, frequency of service and the sacraments, religious and general education, finances,

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178 Adam Fox, 'Printed Questionnaires, Research Networks, and the Discovery of the British Isles, 1650–1800', *Historical Journal,* 53/3 (2010), pp. 599, 604.

179 Sheils, 'Bishops and their Dioceses: Reform of Visitation in the Anglican Church c.1680–c.1760', p. 3; before becoming bishop of Lincoln, Wake was already a highly regarded historian of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval church, see Stephen Taylor, 'Wake, William', in *ODNB* [online edn, Oct 2008; accessed 5 May 2020].

180 Broad, *Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns*, vol. 2, p. 1053.

181 The questions are reprinted in John Slee, 'The Oxford Diocese in the Eighteenth Century: How the Clergy Answered Dr Secker's Visitation Articles of 1738', *The Churchman,* 73 (1959), pp. 17–18.

and residency.[182] The practice of including numerous follow-up questions within a single query frequently resulted in fairly cramped returns, with answers to questions overlapping on the form as the minister struggled to fit them into the space provided. Alternatively, some clergy simply responded to only one or two of the follow-up questions, meaning that often the returns were incomplete. The result was a set of returns that would have been as difficult then as it remains today to scan and assess (for images of various visitation returns, see pp. 103–112).

In 1831 under Bishop Bagot the questionnaire was completely reformatted. The layout of the questions was improved so that returns could be perused more systematically. Following the Roman Catholic Relief Act information regarding the identity and numbers of 'papists', a question asked in Oxford since at least 1738, was removed. In its place more questions were added, raising the total to 44. For the first time questions on the fabric of the Church's buildings were added, thus replicating matters usually covered in the churchwardens returns, and questions on the provision of school education, religious instruction and Sunday School.

In 1827 the bishop of Llandaff, Charles Sumner, introduced statistics into a charge for the first time, using them to contextualize and identify deficiencies.[183] A few years later Bagot drew the clergy's attention in his 1834 charge to 'the *religious Statistics* of the Diocese, as grounded on the returns to the queries with which I have lately troubled you'.[184] He noted in 1838 that:

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182 Two questions, one on irregular marriages and another concerning the salary of the parish clerk, were added in 1805.

183 Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, pp. 28–29.

184 Richard Bagot, *A Charge Addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese, at his Second Visitation, August 1834* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1834), pp. 4–5 [his emphasis].

> 'at each successive Visitation, the answers which you have afforded to my enquiries, have given me the means of making a close review on all points connected with the religious statistics of the Diocese; … at each successive Visitation I find the result of increased exertion, and devotion to the interest of Religion, as well among the Laity as the Clergy'.[185]

Bagot was contributing to a statistical movement that came to special prominence in the 1830s and 40s, as institutions developed practices of surveillance better to measure social need and improvement.[186] Under Wilberforce's episcopacy from the mid-1840s the use of statistics was taken to a new level,[187] and they were unapologetically incorporated throughout his charges, more so than any other nineteenth-century Oxford bishop. He had been one of the bishops most strenuously opposed to the 1851 religious census, arguing that the statistics would be incomplete and unreliable, and so potentially at odds with the interests of the Church.[188] He failed to stop the census from taking place, although with over 27% of the Oxfordshire clergy following Wilberforce's protest and not submitting completed forms the county was the worst represented diocese in the census.[189] Following a published analysis of the census by Horace Mann in 1854 that appeared to confirm Wilberforce's concerns,[190] one of his responses was to collect statistics that he could better trust. The chief instrument in helping him measure and record various aspects

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185 Richard Bagot, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford ... at his Third Visitation, July and August, 1838* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1838), p. 18.

186 Martin Hewitt, *Making Social Knowledge in the Victorian City: the Visiting Mode in Manchester, 1832–1914* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), p. 2.

187 On the Church's growing 'obsession' with statistics see Meacham, *Wilberforce*, p. 143.

188 Kate Tiller, *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire, 1851: the Return of the Census of Religious Worship* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1987), p. xv.

189 *ibid.*, p. xvii.

190 Horace Mann, *Census of Great Britain 1851: Religious Worship in England and Wales, Abridged from the Official Report* (London: G. Routledge and Co., 1854).

of parish life became the visitation returns themselves, and his charges were heavily supported with data taken from them.

Wilberforce wanted to present the public with a commentary of spiritual development and reform within his diocese; the adoption of a strongly statistical approach enabled him to deliver his charges with greater empirical authority. His published charges were a vehicle to demonstrate publicly the Church's ongoing national presence and purpose by identifying material countables that could meaningfully measure religious activity. Furthermore, in his later charges, he used statistics drawn from earlier visitations to map longitudinal change, specifically to determine the success or failure of Church strategy.[191] By presenting his charges in this way he was not only adopting a distinctly modern religious approach; he was also establishing and promoting a language that could quantify spiritual developments through the measurement and counting of various material expressions of faith. In his first charge, for example, relying on fewer statistics than his later charges, the report that 40 out of 757 prisoners in Reading gaol could repeat the apostles' creed, the commandments, and parts of the catechism, and that 140 prisoners were reportedly ignorant of the simplest truths of Holy Scripture, including Christ's name, was used by the bishop to evaluate the degree of commitment to religious belief, education, and literacy in the criminal and lower classes.[192]

From 1850 on the bishop of Oxford would have had for each visitation over 500 completed returns, each written in a different hand, that needed to be read. This

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191 See for example Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge, delivered to the Diocese of Oxford, at his Sixth Visitation, November, 1863* (Oxford [printed], and London, 1863), pp. 14–15.

192 Wilberforce, *1848 Charge*, pp. 17–18.

would have been a considerable undertaking. Working notes from the time shed light on how the bishop's office engaged with these documents. Bundled with the 1854 returns, for example, is a manuscript in the hand of the bishop's secretary John Davenport, with rural parishes listed in columns, crossed with rows that compare the number of communion services and number of communicants with the returns of 1848. For the 1866 returns another statistical abstract in the hand of the archdeacon compared the number of communicants present at greater festivals and resident in the parish, as well as the size of the congregation and the population of the parish from the 1861 census. This abstract is particularly revealing, since it demonstrates how the bishop's office created a statistical base, with non-numerical answers such as 'full' or '⅓ of the population' being translated into round figures, and numbers for a second service crossed out.[193]

The 1866 returns provide the only remaining evidence of how Wilberforce himself interacted with the visitation returns. It consists of notes in two different handwritings: most of the document is written in black ink by the bishop's secretary John Davenport; the other notes are written in blue pencil in the hand of the bishop. Titled a 'statistical abstract', the manuscript arranges the names of all the parishes alphabetically by archdeaconry. Alongside each parish's name space was provided for including particular issues that Davenport thought needed to be brought to the attention of the bishop. In this list many parishes have no note alongside their name, but alongside some are comments by Davenport which demonstrate that he had read

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193 'The Bishop of Oxford's Visitation, 1866: a Statistical Abstract', OHC, Oxf. dioc. papers, c.332 [by John Davenport], fol. 20v.; see chapter five for more discussion and an image of one of its pages on p.394.

the return. Davenport's comments include, for example, 'Parish School needs improvement', 'Deficient in answers', 'Influential Dissenters and Churchwarden's aid', 'Inconvenience of unrestored Chancel', and 'Bad tone of Local Newspapers'. Sometimes the secretary directed the bishop to a particular answer, without any specific note. The bishop's comments, written in blue pencil, are mostly reminders to himself to initiate written communication with a minister directly. Occasionally Wilberforce added further detail: for example, alongside the direction to answer 22 for the parish of Horspath, Wilberforce added the word 'Incest'. This sheds light on how directly and extensively Wilberforce personally engaged with submitted texts of the returned questionnaires. It seems that despite the bishop often noting in his charges the care he took to read through the returns, in practice much of this work was done by his support staff, who passed on to him specific details of parishes and responses that justified his attention.

Mackarness seems to have managed the returns in a similar fashion, requesting that statistical abstracts be compiled on his behalf. For the 1875 visitation, for example, an abstract was drawn up that listed answers to questions on the hymn book, the day observed for intercession, whether or not church attendance had decreased, for which diocesan society collections were taken, and whether or not the church school had been made over to the Board.[194] In Oxfordshire at least, the returns did not suffer the fate of 'lifeless visitations', as in some dioceses where it was suspected the returns were 'put away on a shelf, unattended to'.[195] Even if the bishop did not

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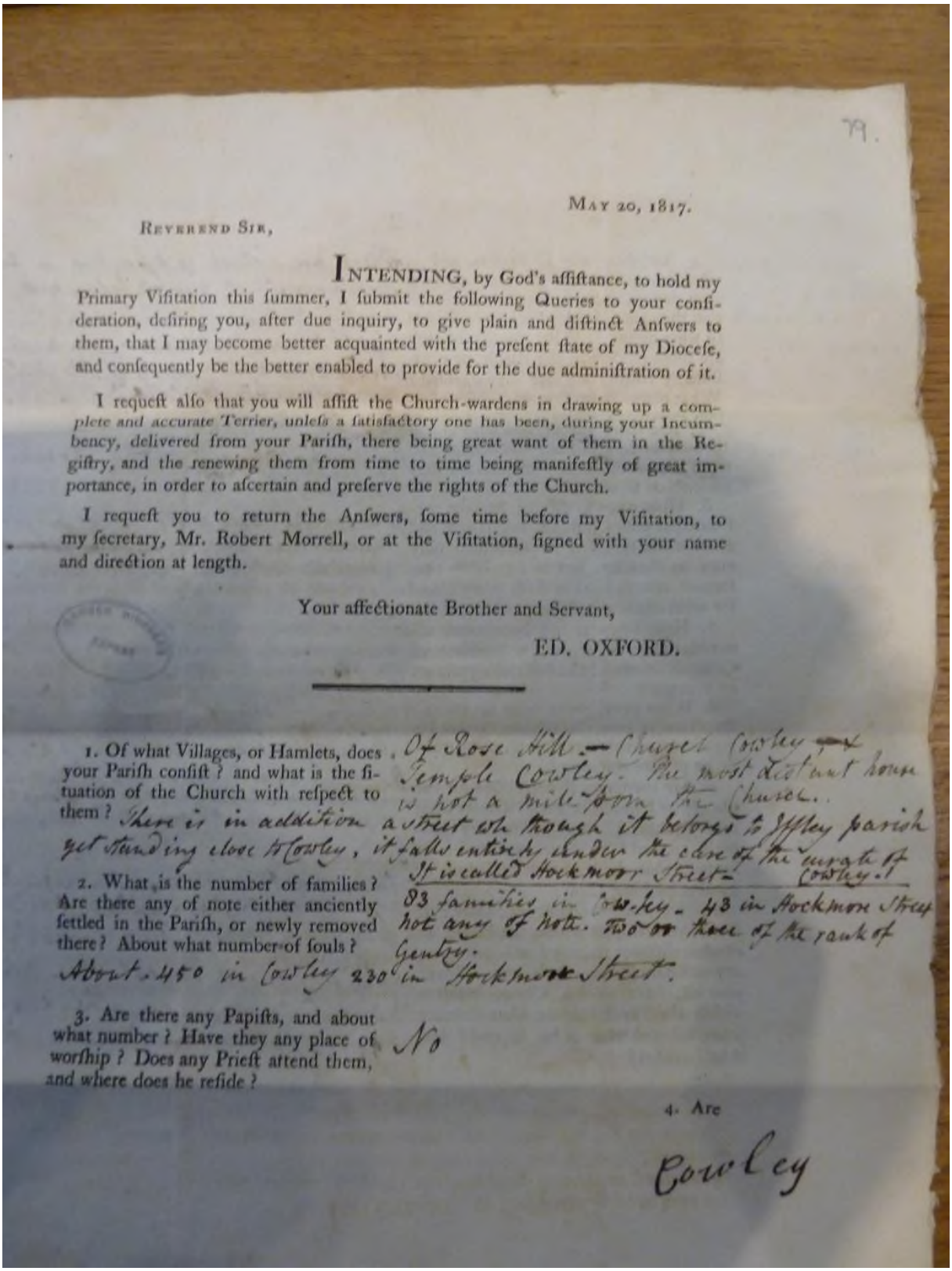
194 'Episcopal Visitation 1875': VR 1875.
195 John M. Clabon, 'Diocesan Organization', *CC* (1869), p. 38.

personally read every return, the responses were carefully perused by his officers to help him engage with the issues most needing intervention.

Under Mackarness and Stubbs, questions were added that more thoroughly examined financial aspects of the Church's assets. These covered such issues as, in 1878, the funding of repairs, and, in 1881, particulars of property insurance. In 1896 ministers were required to provide a breakdown of the annual income of the benefice, as well as key costs. The ongoing manner in which the returns continued to be refined and elaborated is evidence that bishops continued to find the responses a useful source for gathering information about the parishes under their authority.

Conclusion

The parish was the fundamental local unit of the nineteenth-century Church organisation, and, in a wider sense, of the realm of England. During the nineteenth century bishops were expected to conduct visitations of their parishes around every three years, and these visitations were often well-publicised local events. They provided opportunities for a bishop to interact with clergy and laity. In preparation, clergy were required to submit answers to a printed questionnaire covering matters of parish life, the local population, value of the living, the parish's patronage, endowments, and church property. This chapter has examined the context of the visitation return, but has not considered the content of the answers themselves. It is to this that we now turn.



79.

MAY 20, 1817.

REVEREND SIR,

INTENDING, by God's assistance, to hold my Primary Visitation this summer, I submit the following Queries to your consideration, desiring you, after due inquiry, to give plain and distinct Answers to them, that I may become better acquainted with the present state of my Diocese, and consequently be the better enabled to provide for the due administration of it.

I request also that you will assist the Church-wardens in drawing up a *complete and accurate Terrier, unless a satisfactory one has been, during your Incumbency, delivered from your Parish*, there being great want of them in the Registry, and the renewing them from time to time being manifestly of great importance, in order to ascertain and preserve the rights of the Church.

I request you to return the Answers, some time before my Visitation, to my secretary, Mr. Robert Morrell, or at the Visitation, signed with your name and direction at length.

Your affectionate Brother and Servant,

ED. OXFORD.

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1. Of what Villages, or Hamlets, does your Parish consist? and what is the situation of the Church with respect to them? Of Rose Hill — Church Cowley — & Temple Cowley. The most distant house is not a mile from the Church. There is in addition a street which though it belongs to Iffley parish yet standing close to Cowley, it falls entirely under the care of the curate of Cowley. It is called Hockmoor Street.

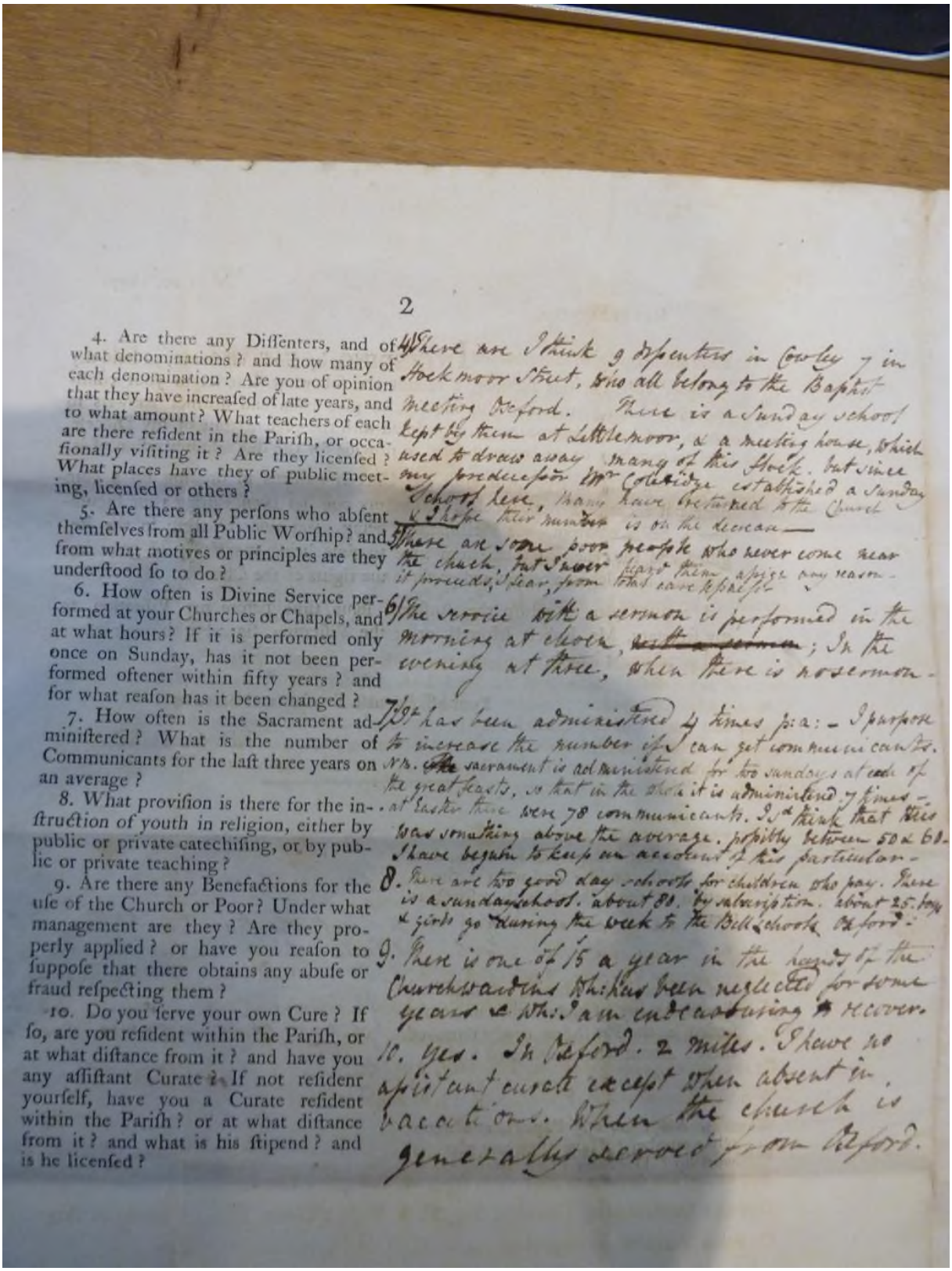
2. What is the number of families? Are there any of note either anciently settled in the Parish, or newly removed there? About what number of souls? About 450 in Cowley 230 83 families in Cowley. 43 in Hockmore Street not any of note. Two or three of the rank of Gentry. in Hockmore Street.

3. Are there any Papists, and about what number? Have they any place of worship? Does any Priest attend them, and where does he reside? No

4. Are

Cowley

Image 2-3 VR 1817, Cowley, f. 2



2

4. Are there any Diſſenters, and of what denominations? and how many of each denomination? Are you of opinion that they have increaſed of late years, and to what amount? What teachers of each are there reſident in the Pariſh, or occaſionally viſiting it? Are they licenſed? What places have they of public meeting, licenſed or others?

4/ There are I think 9 dissenters in Cowley 7 in Hockmoor Street, who all belong to the Baptist meeting Oxford. There is a Sunday school kept by them at Littlemoor, & a meeting house, which used to draw away many of this Sch. but since my predecessor Mr Coleridge established a Sunday School here, many have returned to the Church & I hope their number is on the decrease —

5. Are there any perſons who abſent themſelves from all Public Worſhip? and from what motives or principles are they underſtood ſo to do?

5/ There are some poor people who never come near the church, but I never heard them assign any reason it proceeds, I fear, from total carelessness —

6. How often is Divine Service performed at your Churches or Chapels, and at what hours? If it is performed only once on Sunday, has it not been performed oftener within fifty years? and for what reaſon has it been changed?

6/ The service with a sermon is performed in the morning at eleven, ~~with a sermon~~; In the evening at three, when there is no sermon —

7. How often is the Sacrament adminiſtered? What is the number of Communicants for the laſt three years on an average?

7/ It has been administered 4 times p:a: — I purpose to increase the number if I can get communicants. N.B. The sacrament is administered for two sundays at each of the great feasts, so that in the above it is administered 7 times — at Easter time were 78 communicants. I do think that this was something above the average, probably between 50 & 60. I have begun to keep an account of this particular —

8. What proviſion is there for the inſtruction of youth in religion, either by public or private catechiſing, or by public or private teaching?

8. There are two good day schools for children who pay. There is a sunday school. about 80. by subscription. about 25. boys & girls go during the week to the Bell schools Oxford —

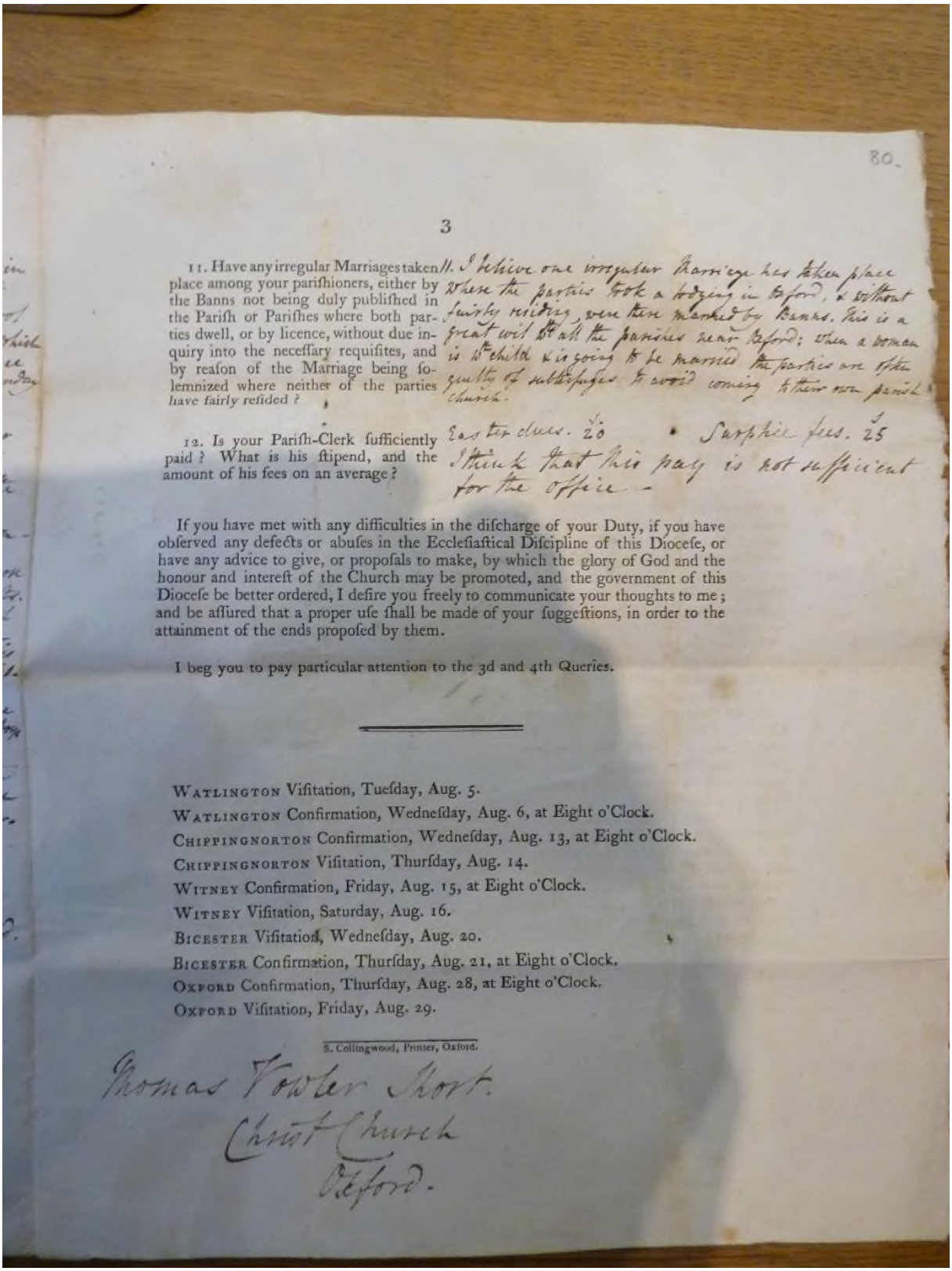
9. Are there any Benefactions for the uſe of the Church or Poor? Under what management are they? Are they properly applied? or have you reaſon to ſuppoſe that there obtains any abuſe or fraud reſpecting them?

9. There is one of £5 a year in the hands of the Churchwardens which has been neglected for some years & which I am endeavouring to recover.

10. Do you ſerve your own Cure? If ſo, are you reſident within the Pariſh, or at what diſtance from it? and have you any aſſiſtant Curate? If not reſident yourſelf, have you a Curate reſident within the Pariſh? or at what diſtance from it? and what is his ſtipend? and is he licenſed?

10. yes. In Oxford. 2 miles. I have no assistant curate except when absent in vacations. When the church is generally supplied from Oxford.

Image 2-4 VR 1817, Cowley, f. 3



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11. Have any irregular Marriages taken place among your parishioners, either by the Banns not being duly published in the Parish or Parishes where both parties dwell, or by licence, without due inquiry into the necessary requisites, and by reason of the Marriage being solemnized where neither of the parties *have fairly resided?*

11. I believe one irregular Marriage has taken place where the parties took a lodging in Oxford, & without fairly residing, were there married by Banns. This is a great evil to all the parishes near Oxford; when a woman is with child & is going to be married the parties are often guilty of subterfuges to avoid coming to their own parish Church.

12. Is your Parish-Clerk sufficiently paid? What is his stipend, and the amount of his fees on an average?

Easter dues. £6 · Surplice fees. £5
I think that his pay is not sufficient for the office.

If you have met with any difficulties in the discharge of your Duty, if you have observed any defects or abuses in the Ecclesiastical Discipline of this Diocese, or have any advice to give, or proposals to make, by which the glory of God and the honour and interest of the Church may be promoted, and the government of this Diocese be better ordered, I desire you freely to communicate your thoughts to me; and be assured that a proper use shall be made of your suggestions, in order to the attainment of the ends proposed by them.

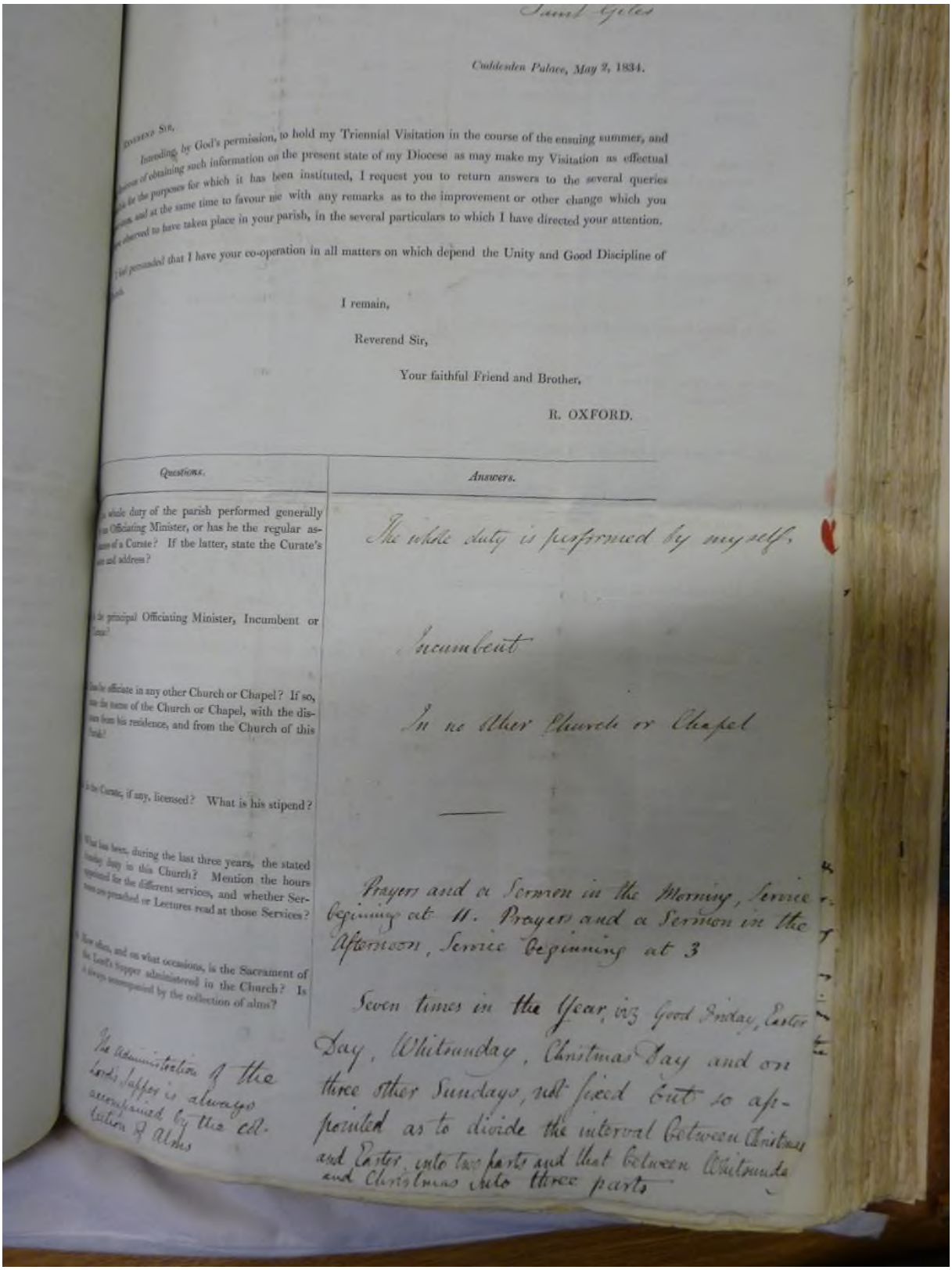
I beg you to pay particular attention to the 3d and 4th Queries.

WATLINGTON Visitation, Tuesday, Aug. 5.
WATLINGTON Confirmation, Wednesday, Aug. 6, at Eight o'Clock.
CHIPPINGNORTON Confirmation, Wednesday, Aug. 13, at Eight o'Clock.
CHIPPINGNORTON Visitation, Thursday, Aug. 14.
WITNEY Confirmation, Friday, Aug. 15, at Eight o'Clock.
WITNEY Visitation, Saturday, Aug. 16.
BICESTER Visitation, Wednesday, Aug. 20.
BICESTER Confirmation, Thursday, Aug. 21, at Eight o'Clock.
OXFORD Confirmation, Thursday, Aug. 28, at Eight o'Clock.
OXFORD Visitation, Friday, Aug. 29.

S. Collingwood, Printer, Oxford.

Thomas Fowler Short.
Christ Church
Oxford.

Image 2-5 VR 1834, St Giles, f. 1



Saint Giles

Cuddesden Palace, May 2, 1834.

Reverend Sir,

Intending, by God's permission, to hold my Triennial Visitation in the course of the ensuing summer, and desirous of obtaining such information on the present state of my Diocese as may make my Visitation as effectual for the purposes for which it has been instituted, I request you to return answers to the several queries which I have subjoined, and at the same time to favour me with any remarks as to the improvement or other change which you may have observed to have taken place in your parish, in the several particulars to which I have directed your attention.

I feel persuaded that I have your co-operation in all matters on which depend the Unity and Good Discipline of the Church.

I remain,

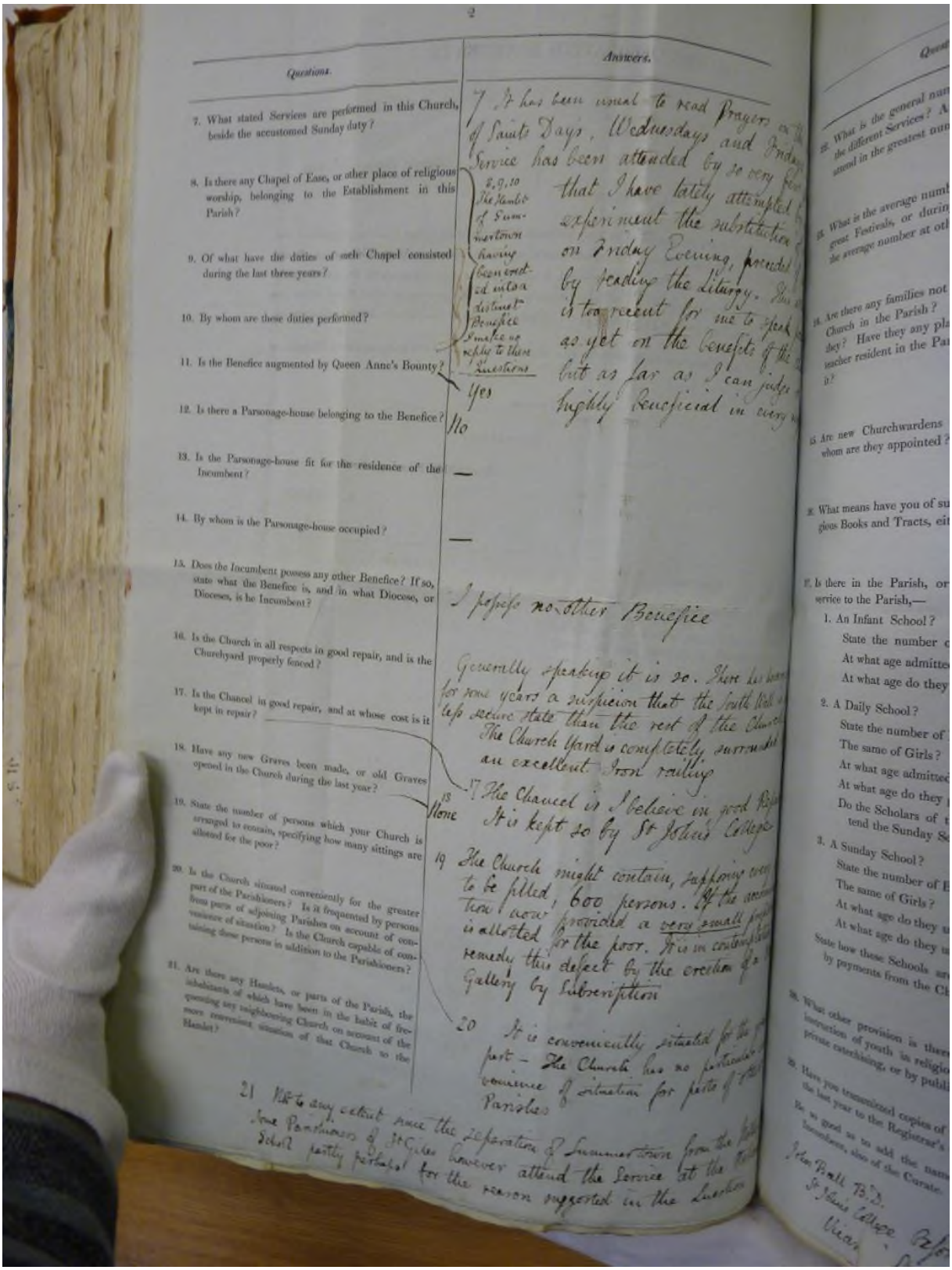
Reverend Sir,

Your faithful Friend and Brother,

R. OXFORD.

Questions.	Answers.
Is the whole duty of the parish performed generally by the Officiating Minister, or has he the regular assistance of a Curate? If the latter, state the Curate's name and address?	The whole duty is performed by myself.
Is the principal Officiating Minister, Incumbent or Curate?	Incumbent
Does he officiate in any other Church or Chapel? If so, state the name of the Church or Chapel, with the distance from his residence, and from the Church of this Parish?	In no other Church or Chapel
Is the Curate, if any, licensed? What is his stipend?	
What has been, during the last three years, the stated Sunday duty in this Church? Mention the hours appointed for the different services, and whether Sermons are preached or Lectures read at those Services?	Prayers and a Sermon in the Morning, Service beginning at 11. Prayers and a Sermon in the Afternoon, Service beginning at 3
How often, and on what occasions, is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered in the Church? Is it always accompanied by the collection of alms?	Seven times in the Year, viz Good Friday, Easter Day, Whitsunday, Christmas Day and on three other Sundays, not fixed but so appointed as to divide the interval between Christmas and Easter into two parts and that between Whitsunday and Christmas into three parts
	The Administration of the Lord's Supper is always accompanied by the collection of Alms

Image 2-6 VR 1834, St Giles, f. 2



Questions.

7. What stated Services are performed in this Church, beside the accustomed Sunday duty?

8. Is there any Chapel of Ease, or other place of religious worship, belonging to the Establishment in this Parish?

9. Of what have the duties of such Chapel consisted during the last three years?

10. By whom are these duties performed?

11. Is the Benefice augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty?

12. Is there a Parsonage-house belonging to the Benefice?

13. Is the Parsonage-house fit for the residence of the Incumbent?

14. By whom is the Parsonage-house occupied?

15. Does the Incumbent possess any other Benefice? If so, state what the Benefice is, and in what Diocese, or Dioceses, is he Incumbent?

16. Is the Church in all respects in good repair, and is the Churchyard properly fenced?

17. Is the Chancel in good repair, and at whose cost is it kept in repair?

18. Have any new Graves been made, or old Graves opened in the Church during the last year?

19. State the number of persons which your Church is arranged to contain, specifying how many sittings are allotted for the poor?

20. Is the Church situated conveniently for the greater part of the Parishioners? Is it frequented by persons from parts of adjoining Parishes on account of convenience of situation? Is the Church capable of containing those persons in addition to the Parishioners?

21. Are there any Hamlets, or parts of the Parish, the inhabitants of which have been in the habit of frequenting any neighbouring Church on account of the more convenient situation of that Church to the Hamlet?

Answers.

7 It has been usual to read Prayers on the
of Saints Days, Wednesdays and Fridays
Service has been attended by so very few
that I have lately attempted the
experiment the substitution
on Friday Evening, preceded
by reading the Litany. This
is too recent for me to speak
as yet on the benefits of the
but as far as I can judge
highly Beneficial in every

8, 9, 10 The Hamlet of Summertown having been united to a distinct Benefice I make no reply to these Questions

11 Yes

12 No

13 —

14 —

15 I possess no other Benefice

16 Generally speaking it is so. There has been
for some years a suspicion that the South Wall
less secure state than the rest of the Church
The Church Yard is completely surrounded
an excellent Iron railing

17 The Chancel is I believe in good Repair
It is kept so by St Johns College

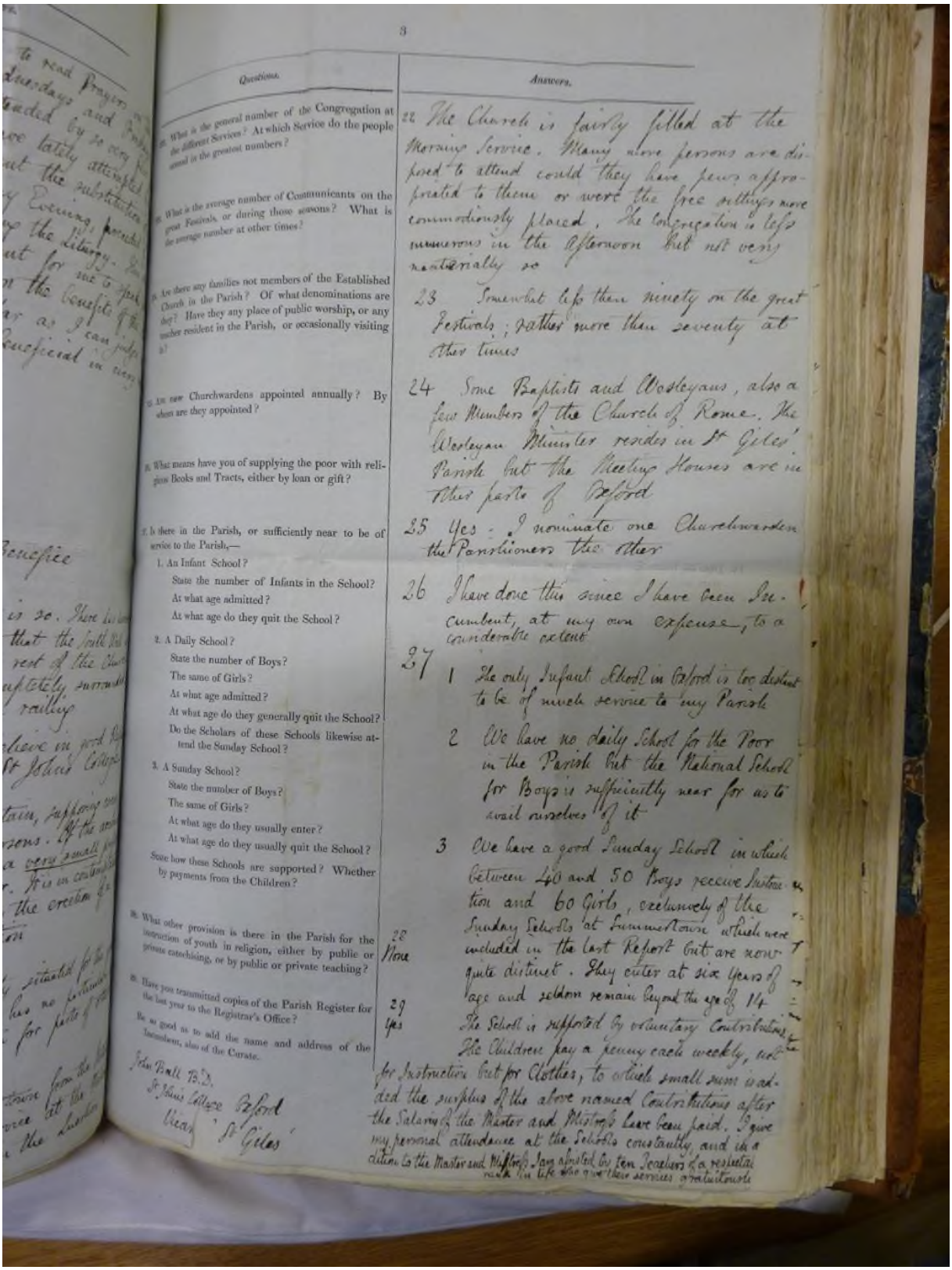
18 None

19 The Church might contain, supposing every
to be filled, 600 persons. Of these
Town now provided a very small
is allotted for the poor. It is in contemplation
remedy this defect by the erection of a
Gallery by Subscription

20 It is conveniently situated for the
part - The Church has no particular
convenience of situation for parts of
Parishes

21 Not to any extent since the Separation of Summertown from the
Some Parishioners of St Giles however attend the Service at the
School partly perhaps for the reason suggested in the Question

Image 2-7 VR 1834, St Giles, f. 3



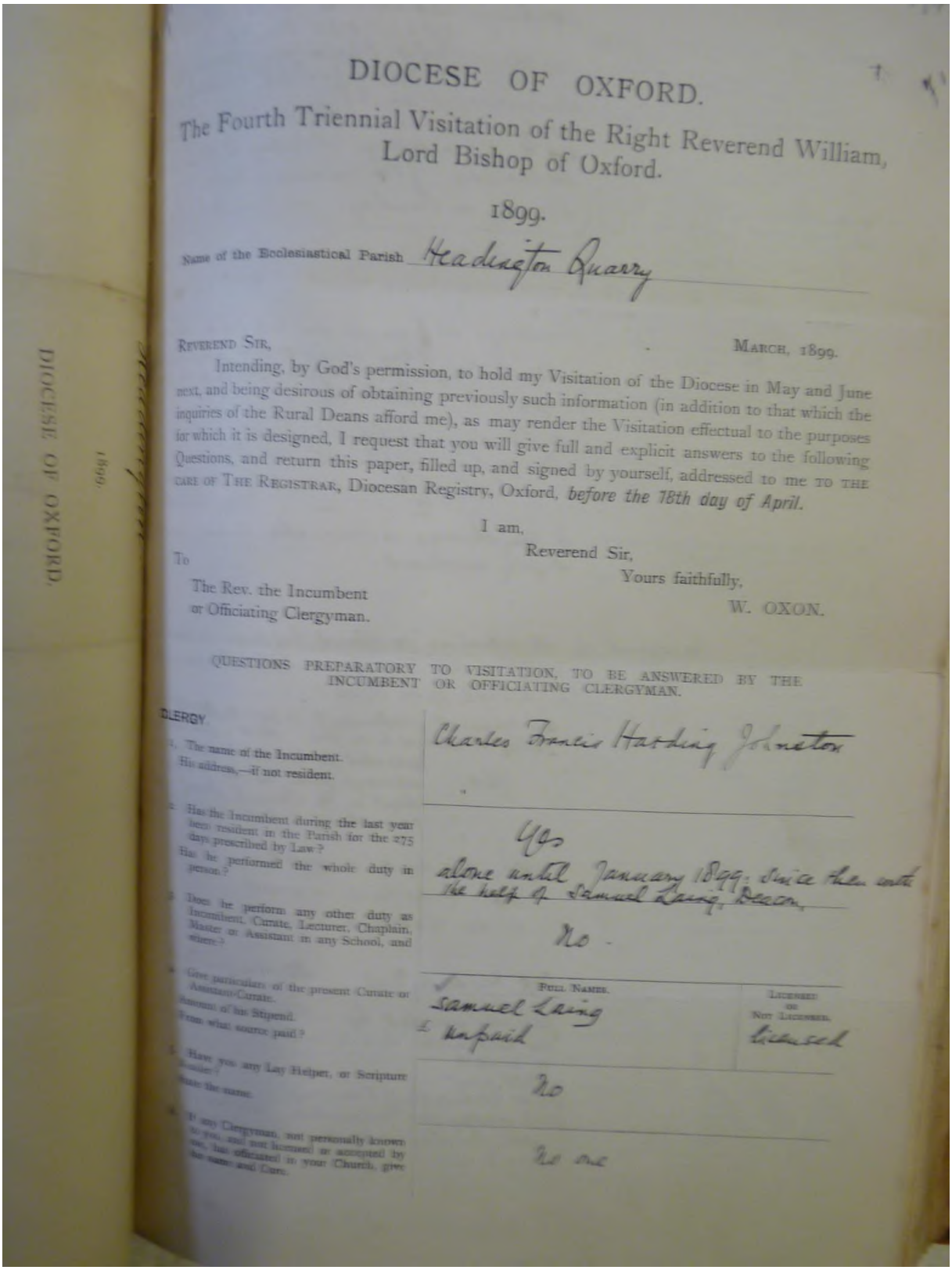
3

Questions.	Answers.
22. What is the general number of the Congregation at the different Services? At which Service do the people attend in the greatest numbers?	22 The Church is fairly filled at the Morning Service. Many more persons are disposed to attend could they have pews appropriated to them or were the free sittings more commodiously placed. The Congregation is less numerous in the Afternoon but not very materially so
23. What is the average number of Communicants on the great Festivals, or during those seasons? What is the average number at other times?	23 Somewhat less than ninety on the great Festivals; rather more than seventy at other times
24. Are there any families not members of the Established Church in the Parish? Of what denominations are they? Have they any place of public worship, or any teacher resident in the Parish, or occasionally visiting it?	24 Some Baptists and Wesleyans, also a few Members of the Church of Rome. The Wesleyan Minister resides in St Giles' Parish but the Meeting Houses are in other parts of Oxford
25. Are new Churchwardens appointed annually? By whom are they appointed?	25 Yes - I nominate one Churchwarden the Parishioners the other
26. What means have you of supplying the poor with religious Books and Tracts, either by loan or gift?	26 I have done this since I have been Incumbent, at my own expence, to a considerable extent
27. Is there in the Parish, or sufficiently near to be of service to the Parish,— 1. An Infant School? State the number of Infants in the School? At what age admitted? At what age do they quit the School? 2. A Daily School? State the number of Boys? The same of Girls? At what age admitted? At what age do they generally quit the School? Do the Scholars of these Schools likewise attend the Sunday School? 3. A Sunday School? State the number of Boys? The same of Girls? At what age do they usually enter? At what age do they usually quit the School? State how these Schools are supported? Whether by payments from the Children?	27 1 The only Infant School in Oxford is too distant to be of much service to my Parish 2 We have no daily School for the Poor in the Parish but the National School for Boys is sufficiently near for us to avail ourselves of it 3 We have a good Sunday School in which between 40 and 50 Boys receive Instruction and 60 Girls, exclusively of the Sunday Schools at Summertown which were included in the last Report but are now quite distinct. They enter at six years of age and seldom remain beyond the age of 14
28. What other provision is there in the Parish for the instruction of youth in religion, either by public or private catechising, or by public or private teaching?	28 None
29. Have you transmitted copies of the Parish Register for the last year to the Registrar's Office?	29 Yes
Be so good as to add the name and address of the Incumbent, also of the Curate.	The School is supported by voluntary Contributions the Children pay a penny each weekly, not for Instruction but for Clothes, to which small sum is added the surplus of the above named Contributions after the Salaries of the Master and Mistress have been paid. I give my personal attendance at the Schools constantly, and am assisted by ten Teachers of a respectable class who give their services gratuitously

John Ball B.D.
St John's College Oxford
Vicar of St Giles'

Image 2-8 VR 1872, St Aldate, ff. 2–3

Image 2-9 VR 1899, Headington Quarry, f. 1



DIOCESE OF OXFORD.

The Fourth Triennial Visitation of the Right Reverend William, Lord Bishop of Oxford.

1899.

Name of the Ecclesiastical Parish Headington Quarry

REVEREND SIR, MARCH, 1899.

Intending, by God's permission, to hold my Visitation of the Diocese in May and June next, and being desirous of obtaining previously such information (in addition to that which the inquiries of the Rural Deans afford me), as may render the Visitation effectual to the purposes for which it is designed, I request that you will give full and explicit answers to the following Questions, and return this paper, filled up, and signed by yourself, addressed to me TO THE CARE OF THE REGISTRAR, Diocesan Registry, Oxford, *before the 18th day of April.*

I am,
Reverend Sir,
Yours faithfully,
W. OXON.

To
The Rev. the Incumbent
or Officiating Clergyman.

QUESTIONS PREPARATORY TO VISITATION, TO BE ANSWERED BY THE INCUMBENT OR OFFICIATING CLERGYMAN.

CLERGY.

1. The name of the Incumbent.
His address,—if not resident.

Charles Francis Harding Johnston

2. Has the Incumbent during the last year been resident in the Parish for the 275 days prescribed by Law?
Has he performed the whole duty in person?

Yes
alone until January 1899: since then with the help of Samuel Laing, Deacon.

3. Does he perform any other duty as Incumbent, Curate, Lecturer, Chaplain, Master or Assistant in any School, and where?

No.

4. Give particulars of the present Curate or Assistant-Curate.
Amount of his Stipend.
From what source paid?

	Full Names.	Licensed or Not Licensed.
	Samuel Laing	Licensed
£	Unpaid	

5. Have you any Lay Helper, or Scripture Reader?
State the name.

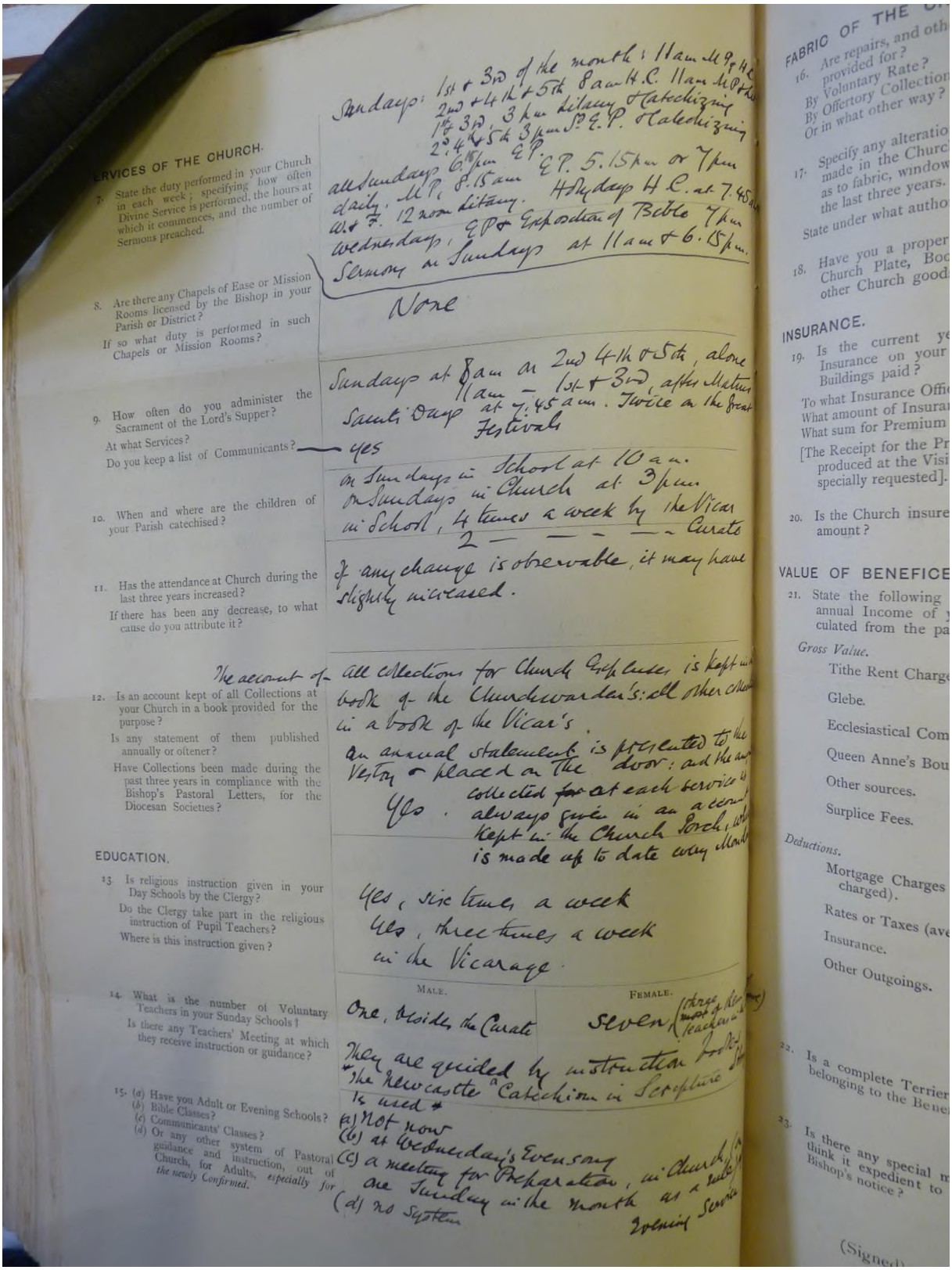
No

6. If any Clergyman, not personally known to you, and not licensed or accepted by you, has officiated in your Church, give the name and date.

No one

DIOCESE OF OXFORD. 1899. Headington Quarry

Image 2-10 VR 1899, Headington Quarry, f. 2



SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

7. State the duty performed in your Church in each week; specifying how often Divine Service is performed, the hours at which it commences, and the number of Sermons preached.

Sundays: 1st + 3rd of the month: 11 am & 9 & 4
2nd + 4th + 5th 8 am H.C. 11 am & 6.15 pm
1st 3rd 3 pm Litany & Catechizing
2nd 4th 5th 3 pm S.S. E.P. & Catechizing
all Sundays 6.15 pm E.P. E.P. 5.15 pm or 7 pm
daily M.P. 8.15 am H.C. at 7.45 am
W. & F. 12 noon Litany.
Wednesday, E.P. & Exposition of Bible 7 pm
Sermon on Sundays at 11 am & 6.15 pm.

8. Are there any Chapels of Ease or Mission Rooms licensed by the Bishop in your Parish or District?
If so what duty is performed in such Chapels or Mission Rooms?

None

9. How often do you administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?
At what Services?
Do you keep a list of Communicants? — yes

Sundays at 8 am on 2nd 4th or 5th, alone
11 am — 1st + 3rd, after Matins
Saints' Days at 7.45 am. Twice on the Great Festivals

10. When and where are the children of your Parish catechised?

on Sundays in School at 10 am.
on Sundays in Church at 3 pm
in School, 4 times a week by the Vicar
2 — — — — Curate

11. Has the attendance at Church during the last three years increased?
If there has been any decrease, to what cause do you attribute it?

If any change is observable, it may have slightly increased.

12. Is an account kept of all Collections at your Church in a book provided for the purpose?
Is any statement of them published annually or oftener?
Have Collections been made during the past three years in compliance with the Bishop's Pastoral Letters, for the Diocesan Societies?

The account of all collections for Church Sch. Lunes, is kept in book of the Churchwarden's: all other collections in a book of the Vicar's.
an annual statement is presented to the Vestry & placed on the door: and the amount collected for at each service is always given in an account kept in the Church Porch, which is made up to date every Monday.
Yes.

EDUCATION.

13. Is religious instruction given in your Day Schools by the Clergy?
Do the Clergy take part in the religious instruction of Pupil Teachers?
Where is this instruction given?

Yes, six times a week
Yes, three times a week
in the Vicarage.

14. What is the number of Voluntary Teachers in your Sunday Schools?
Is there any Teachers' Meeting at which they receive instruction or guidance?

MALE.	FEMALE.
One, besides the Curate	seven (three not of the Teachers)

They are guided by instruction books & the Newcastle Catechism in Scripture is used.

15. (a) Have you Adult or Evening Schools?
(b) Bible Classes?
(c) Communicants' Classes?
(d) Or any other system of Pastoral guidance and instruction, out of Church, for Adults, especially for the newly Confirmed.

(a) Not now
(b) at Wednesday's Evensong
(c) a meeting for Preparation, in Church, one Sunday in the month as a rule, after Evening Service
(d) no system

FABRIC OF THE
16. Are repairs, and oth provided for?
By Voluntary Rate?
By Offertory Collection
Or in what other way?

17. Specify any alteratio made in the Churc as to fabric, window the last three years.
State under what autho

18. Have you a proper Church Plate, Boo other Church good

INSURANCE.

19. Is the current ye Insurance on your Buildings paid?
To what Insurance Offi
What amount of Insura
What sum for Premium
[The Receipt for the Pr produced at the Visi specially requested].

20. Is the Church insure amount?

VALUE OF BENEFICE

21. State the following annual Income of culated from the pa

Gross Value.
Tithe Rent Charge
Glebe.
Ecclesiastical Com
Queen Anne's Bou
Other sources.
Surplice Fees.

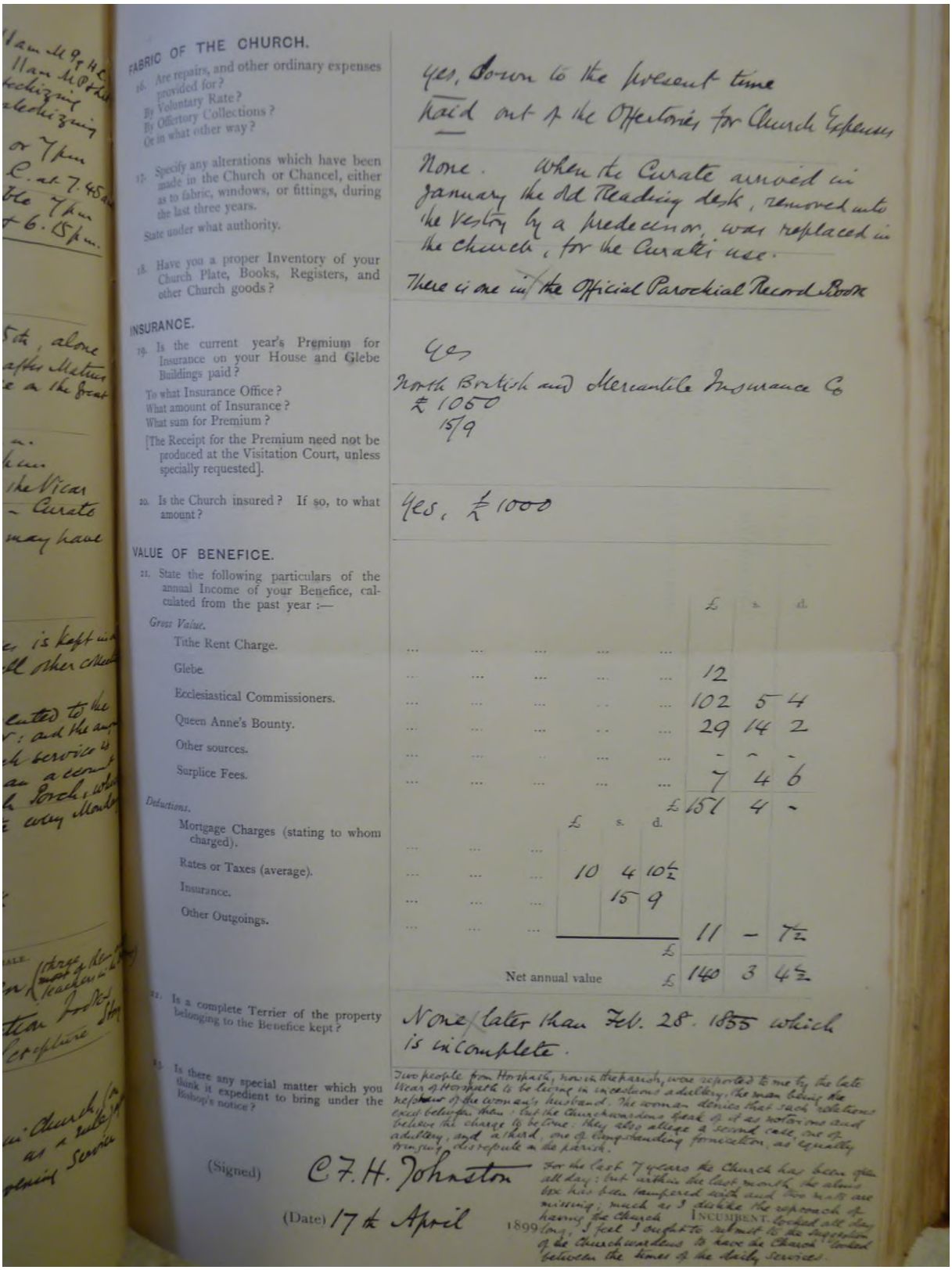
Deductions.
Mortgage Charges charged).
Rates or Taxes (ave
Insurance.
Other Outgoings.

22. Is a complete Terrier belonging to the Bene

23. Is there any special m think it expedient to Bishop's notice?

(Signed)

Image 2-11 VR 1899, Headington Quarry, f. 3



FABRIC OF THE CHURCH.

16. Are repairs, and other ordinary expenses provided for?
By Voluntary Rate?
By Offertory Collections?
Or in what other way?

Yes, down to the present time
Paid out of the Offertories for Church Expenses

17. Specify any alterations which have been made in the Church or Chancel, either as to fabric, windows, or fittings, during the last three years.
State under what authority.

None. When the Curate arrived in January the old Reading desk, removed into the Vestry by a predecessor, was replaced in the church, for the Curate's use.

18. Have you a proper Inventory of your Church Plate, Books, Registers, and other Church goods?

There is one in the Official Parochial Record Book

INSURANCE.

19. Is the current year's Premium for Insurance on your House and Glebe Buildings paid?
To what Insurance Office?
What amount of Insurance?
What sum for Premium?
[The Receipt for the Premium need not be produced at the Visitation Court, unless specially requested].

Yes
North British and Mercantile Insurance Co
£1050
15/9

20. Is the Church insured? If so, to what amount?

Yes, £1000

VALUE OF BENEFICE.

21. State the following particulars of the annual Income of your Benefice, calculated from the past year :—

	£	s.	d.
Gross Value.			
Tithe Rent Charge.			
Glebe.	12		
Ecclesiastical Commissioners.	102	5	4
Queen Anne's Bounty.	29	14	2
Other sources.	-	-	-
Surplice Fees.	7	4	6
	£151	4	-
Deductions.	£ s. d.		
Mortgage Charges (stating to whom charged).			
Rates or Taxes (average).	10 4 10½		
Insurance.	15 9		
Other Outgoings.			
	£	11	- 7½
Net annual value	£	140	3 4½

22. Is a complete Terrier of the property belonging to the Benefice kept?

None later than Feb. 28. 1855 which is incomplete.

23. Is there any special matter which you think it expedient to bring under the Bishop's notice?

Two people from Horspath, now in the parish, were reported to me by the late Vicar of Horspath to be living in incestuous adultery, the man being the nephew of the woman's husband. The woman denies that such relations exist between them: but the Churchwardens speak of it as notorious and believe the charge to be true: they also allege a second case, one of long-standing fornication, as equally disreputable in the parish.

(Signed) C. H. Johnston

(Date) 17th April 1899

For the last 7 years the Church has been open all day; but within the last month the alms box has been tampered with and two keys are missing; much as I dislike the reproach of having the Church locked all day long, I feel I ought to submit to the suggestion of the Churchwardens to have the Church locked between the times of the daily Services.

INCUMBENT.

3: The Clergy and their University

The nineteenth-century visitation returns of Oxfordshire contain a wealth of information describing the clergy who worked in each parish.[1] 467 clergymen are mentioned in the visitation returns between 1802 and 1899. An analysis of the details of these incumbents, officiating ministers, and assisting curates forms the substance of this chapter.[2] Questions from the beginning of the century addressing

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1 Although the name of the incumbent was not formally requested until 1834, if the incumbent was completing the return he signed his name at the end in nearly all cases.

2 An individual appointed by his patron to a cure is referred to as the *incumbent*. Depending on the nature of the parish, the titles for the *officiating minister* were *vicar*, *rector*, or *perpetual curate* (over the course of the nineteenth century some perpetual curates began styling themselves as vicars.) Alternatively, the incumbent sometimes appointed a *stipendiary curate* to act as the officiating minister in place of himself. In this thesis, 'minister' is used to refer to an officiating minister. The ministers in the three peculiars included in this review were described as *chaplains*, and are referred to as such, until they became perpetual curates in 1846 and 1847. An officiating minister sometimes appointed one or more assistants, usually described as either *curates* or *assistant curates*, to help him in his work. In this thesis the title 'assistant curate' is used when context makes it necessary to distinguish them from a curate appointed by an incumbent to be the officiating minister, but in general text this distinction is usually unnecessary.

pluralism and residency provide information on where the officiating minister lived and whether he worked anywhere else. Names, addresses, and licensing details of curates were first requested in 1831, although stipendiary information had been requested since before 1802.

Information on each clergyman has been supplemented, where possible, by a systematic review of ten standard biographical resources,[3] alongside other sources. In all, 442 people have been identified, with 25 remaining unaccounted for. Those unidentified were all assistant curates: 19 were mentioned in returns from 1802 to 1823 but not named, and six between 1854 and 1881 were either unnamed or were in handwriting that has proved indecipherable. That the preponderance of unnamed curates is from the first quarter of the century is not unexpected. Jago noted that in the eighteenth century the assistant curates emerged 'as the most shadowy part' of the visitation returns,[4] and their wider recognition as a valuable component of the parochial system is reflected in their being more consistently documented over the course of the nineteenth century.

Haig has observed that clerical prosopography necessarily excludes individual clerical biography.[5] In this chapter the number of clergy, time frame, and

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3 Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 4 vols. (Parker, Oxford: 1891); Foster, *Oxford Men: 1880–1892* (Parker, Oxford: 1893); ACAD: A Cambridge Alumni Database [online database: venn.lib.cam.ac.uk; accessed 2018 and 2019]; Richard Gilbert, *The Clerical Guide or Ecclesiastical Directory* (vols. for 1817 and 1829); *The Clergy List* (vol. for 1841); *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (vols. for 1858, 1868, 1871, 1874, 1881, 1885, 1891, 1898, 1908, and 1932); *ODNB*; CCEd: *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835* [online database: www.theclergydatabase.org.uk; accessed 2018 and 2019]; *ODC* (1860–1901); in ancestry.com all will and probate records were accessed, and, less systematically, some birth, death, and marriage certificates, as well as some census returns.

4 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 162.

5 Alan Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 215.

methodological constraints have been consciously chosen to present a study that to some degree challenges this assertion. Data are arranged to identify trends and patterns, but where possible these observations are interpreted within a parochial local context, which in turn can be seen as part of a wider religious and cultural context.

In this chapter several biographical aspects are considered in turn: the different clerical roles taken on, the cleric's education and connection to the University, their patrons and party allegiance, and their wealth, age, and experience. These factors are then drawn together to examine the main motives that drew them to their religious calling. It is argued that the secularization of the University had a direct impact on the importance and function of the city's parish churches. Evidence that the ministers in the second half of the century had a stronger commitment to their pastoral work is found within the visitation returns by examining how ministers described the obstacles that they thought were hindering their work.

Clergy numbers

The visitation returns between 1802 and 1899 offer a series of 'snapshots', each capturing data from the records of 27 events — episcopal visitations — that took place over the century. Some reference to events between visitation dates has been undertaken to determine specific biographical details, but investigating clergy not mentioned in the returns is beyond the scope of this study. Clergy whose work in the

parish fell entirely between two visitations, for example, might not be accounted for.[6] From the second half of the century only a few clergy appear to have been omitted, nearly all of them curates: Arthur Cowie, curate at St Paul 1872–73, and Marsh Kirkby, curate at St Barnabas 1883–87[7], are two of a handful of examples. But where wider gaps occur between surviving visitation returns — such as between 1823 and 1832 and between 1838 and 1851 — some officiating ministers as well as curates are necessarily excluded from the study.

The combined lifespans of these clergy cover a period of time — 214 years — much longer than the century under examination. John Wills, absent incumbent of St Andrew Headington from 1776 to 1804, was born in 1741, and Arthur Henry Tolitt, assistant curate at St Michael in 1896, died in 1955. The circumstances of the clergy after 1900 are of less relevance, but it is important to acknowledge the degree to which eighteenth-century issues shaped the minds and attitudes of clergy active in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. 41 clergy matriculated (all in Oxford) during the eighteenth century, and 64 clergy (14.3% of the total) were Oxford students before the end of the Napoleonic wars. They were graduates from a

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6 One notable omission is H.B. Bulteel, curate at St Ebbe 1826–31, a charismatic preacher who seceded from the Church and founded a dissenting church in the same parish in 1832; see p. 290 for more details.

7 Kirkby was later minister at St Mary Magdalen, 1913–29.

university that had prioritized the value of classical texts[8] and of written authority at the expense of observation.[9]

Cross-referencing biographical data from the Oxford visitation returns with other historical resources exposes a relatively low degree of error in widely used texts such as *Fosters* and *Crockford*. It is to be expected that some errors, especially errors of omission, exist in large contemporary published works compiling data on hundreds of different people and records. But small corrections can be made using visitation return data, and omissions filled in. Examples of appointments overlooked in standard sources but recorded in the visitation returns include Walter Partridge's assistant curacy at St John the Baptist Oxford 1881 and 1884,[10] and Fraser Penny's assistance at St Michael 1890 and 1893.[11] John Hughes's record in the visitation returns as officiating minister of Iffley in 1820 — completed by himself — is absent not only in Crockford and CCEd but also Edward Marshall's history of the parish.[12] Peer-reviewed sources such as the *ODNB* include the occasional error, such as its article on Robert Walker, which notes that from 1813 to 1815 Walker was curate at St Ebbe (he was in fact curate at St Peter-le-Bailey from 1812 to 1815).[13] It should be noted, however, that the CCEd is particularly vulnerable to error and research drawn

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8 Christopher Stray, 'Non-Identical Twins: Classics in Nineteenth-Century Oxford and Cambridge', in Christopher Stray and Constanze Güthenke, (eds.), *Classics in Britain: Scholarship, Education, and Publishing, 1800–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

9 John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 79.

10 VRs 1881, 1884, St John the Baptist Oxford.

11 VRs 1890, 1893, St Michael.

12 Edward Marshall, *An Account of the Township of Iffley*, 2nd edn (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1874).

13 J.R. MacDonald and Stephen Gregory, 'Walker, Robert Francis', in *ODNB* [online edn, Sep 2004; accessed 20 May 2019].

from this hugely valuable tool must take this into account.[14] For example, Robert Wall, listed as perpetual curate of Holywell 1790–1823, died in 1803,[15] and Peter Vaughan, listed as perpetual curate at St Peter in the East 1802–24, left St Peter in the East by 1803 at the latest.[16]

The visitation records in this study supply more nuanced and accurate numbers than any other single source. While secondary sources such as *Foster*, *Crockford*, or the *Oxford Diocesan Calendar and Clergy List* record a person's formal connections and placements, the visitation returns provide a primary source account of what clerical arrangements were in operation in the parish at the time the return was completed. For example, the pragmatics of finding a curate for an available position, or managing stress or illness, or even being able to afford to be available for parochial work during the day, affected how a parish church was staffed, and who was taking responsibility for the required religious duties. As such, this chapter draws on a complex, but more accurate, record of the ebb and flow of work in a reasonably large number of parishes over the course of a century.

The record of the visitation returns for 1823, for example, notes that while residing at Christ Church, an unlicensed Mr Cox, proctor at Christ Church, served the church

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14 See for example Sara Slinn, 'Appendix 2: a Note on Methodology', in *The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1780–1839* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), pp. 222–28; on general methodological issues with compiling the CCEd, see Arthur Burns, Kenneth Fincham, and Stephen Taylor, 'Reconstructing Clerical Careers: the Experience of the Clergy of the Church of England Database', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 55/4 (2004), pp. 733–37.

15 VR 1805, St Peter in the East and St Cross; see 'Robert Wall (CCEd Person ID 38106)', CCEd [accessed 28 May 2019].

16 Vaughan had left Oxford by 1812; see VRs 1805, St Peter in the East; 1805, 1808, 1811 St Cross; and 'Peter Vaughan (CCEd Person ID 20154)', CCEd [accessed 28 Mar 2019].

during term time.[17] Described in 1823 as 'merely a temporary arrangement' it appears that he remained in this appointment until at least 1827.[18] In 1866 the incumbent of St John the Baptist, Harry Sargent, had taken leave of absence for medical reasons, and his curate was acting as officiating minister for the year, as did the incumbent George Kemp when he took medical leave in 1881 at St Frideswide.[19] Conversely, a minister may have preferred having a curate but nevertheless had to work without assistance from time to time. In 1869 A.M.W. Christopher at St Aldate was working without a curate until Christmas; he was again on his own for most of 1878 when the curate due to be engaged asked permission to defer his start date to assist his current incumbent, who had unexpectedly become paralysed.[20] Nor are these isolated cases: at St Clement in 1869 the minister John Darby found himself on his own as he had been unable to appoint a curate, and again in 1872 when both his curates unexpectedly left.[21]

In an analysis of the data in this thesis it is not unreasonable to propose that, in certain respects — and certainly in regard to clergy numbers — the century can be divided into three timeframes that roughly span the years 1800 to 1838 and 1854 to 1900, with an important transitional period connecting them. In many instances, the middle of the century is the crucial period around which change can be mapped. [22]

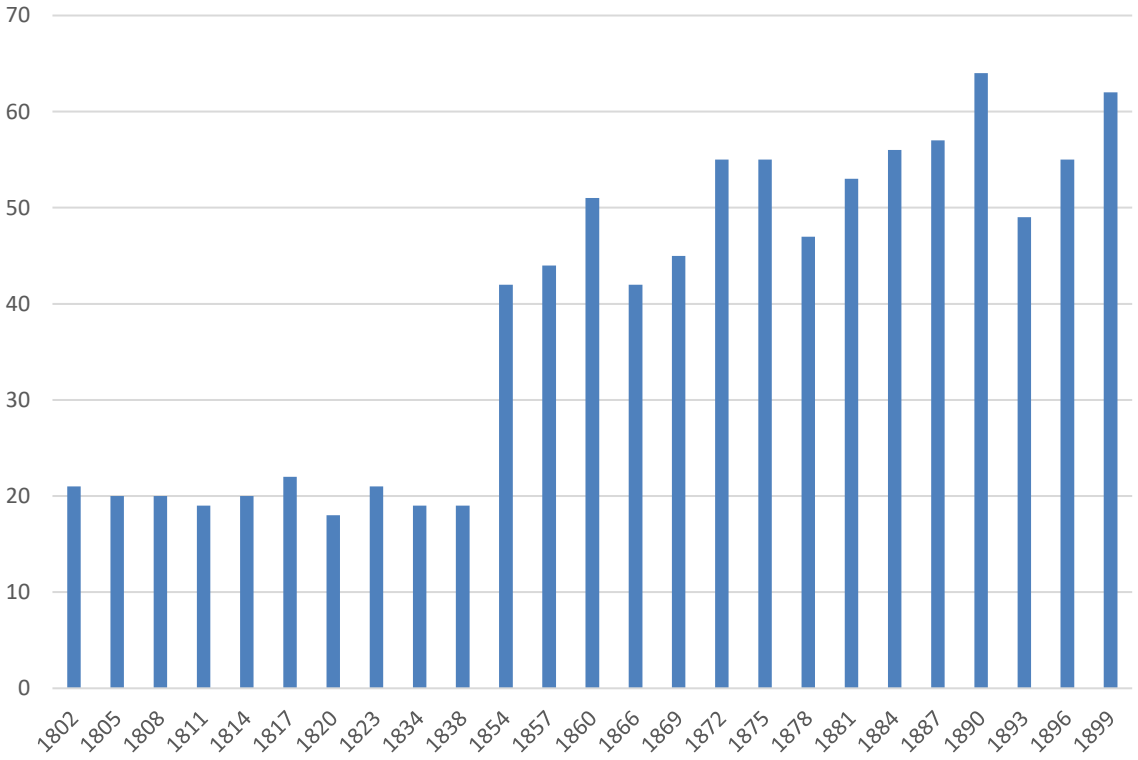
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17 VR 1823, Cowley.
18 VRs 1823, 1827, Cowley.
19 VRs 1866 St John the Baptist; 1881 St Frideswide.
20 VRs 1869, 1878, St Aldate.
21 VRs 1869, 1872, St Clement.
22 A consequence of missing data between 1838 and 1854 is the risk of misinterpreting the graphs and inferring a sudden jump in numbers in 1854, though it is possible that

Despite this, it is evident that some changes were more gradual, suggesting that a multiplicity of factors were at play.

In examining clergy named in the Oxford visitation returns it is strikingly apparent (Graph 3-1) that between 1838 and 1854 there was a significant increase in clergy working in the parish churches. Up to 1838 the number of clergy remained relatively stable. Not counting absentee incumbents, who by definition where not present, an average of just under 17 individuals were named as being parochially active at any

Graph 3-1 Active clergy, 1802–99



between these years a more gradual change took place. This caution applies to much of the data that follows in this chapter. The fact that data are missing from the 1840s may be an indicator of turmoil and change that the church administration was experiencing, such that record-keeping was a lower priority.

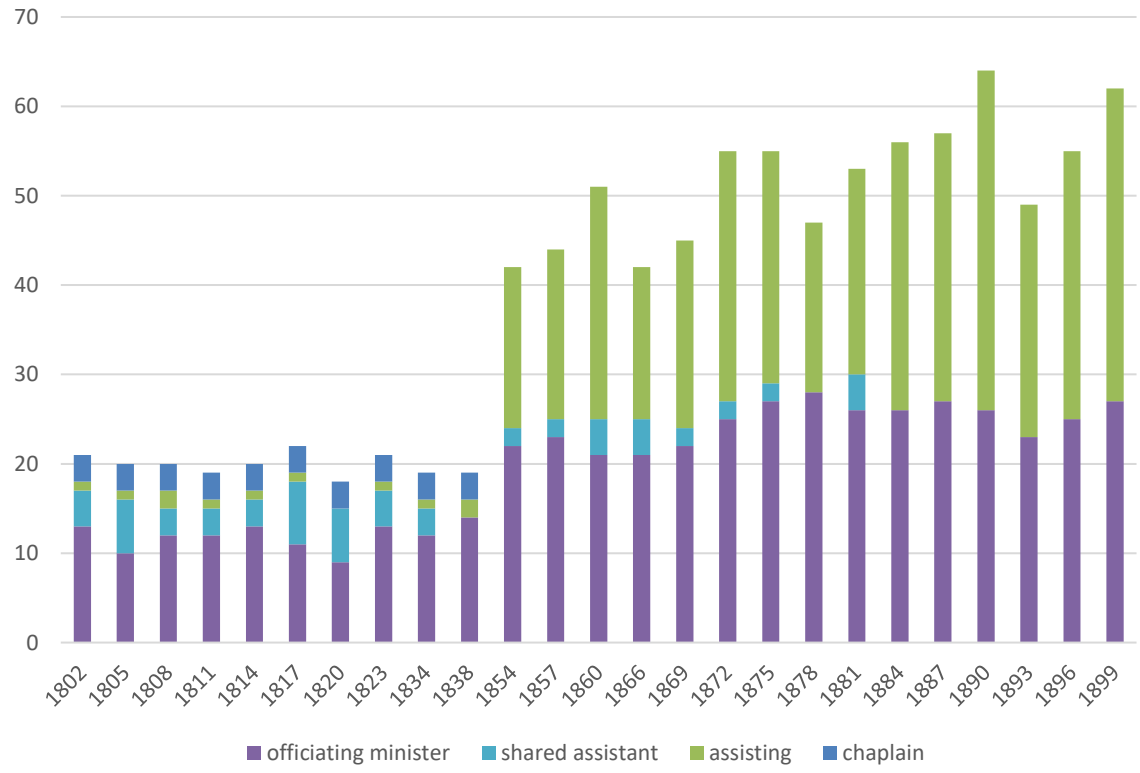
one time between 1802 and 1838. From 1854 to 1899 this average rose to over 51 people.

Clerical roles

Graph 3-2 replicates the data of Graph 3-1, but clergy are categorized as one of four types of clerical appointments within the parish: officiating minister, chaplain, assistant/assistant curate, or shared assistant.

'Officiating minister' refers to either the incumbent or a stipendiary curate[23] who

Graph 3-2 Active clergy: clerical roles, 1802–99



[23] Sometimes labelled in nineteenth-century sources as 'curate-incumbent' or 'substitute curate'.

served in the incumbent's place. Two circumstances that could lead to an incumbent being absent were non-residency, where an incumbent did not live in or near the parish, and pluralism, where an incumbent was responsible for more than one cure, such that he had to take his place in one or more of the parishes. Visitation returns from the eighteenth century suggest that pluralism was accepted as normal, especially as a solution to financial difficulty;[24] certainly the late eighteenth-century Church was criticised for its apparent inefficacy in addressing these widely held concerns.[25] But from early in the nineteenth century a more critical view was developing. The 1838 Pluralities Act limited pluralism to two livings, and further amendments in 1850 effectively eliminated it altogether, except in exceptional circumstances.[26] Non-residency was defined by parliament in 1813 as residing further than five miles from the parish church,[27] a distance reduced to two miles in 1838.

An example of pluralism in the relevant visitation returns includes St Aldate, which was served by a succession of curates 1810–49, as the absent incumbent William Hawkins was also vicar at Faringdon and, by 1838, master of a grammar school in Cheltenham.[28] There are also instances of clergy holding two posts concurrently at parishes in this study: Cox Hales was curate at St Peter-le-Bailey (1847–55) and incumbent, with some years' overlap, at St Martin Carfax (1850–72); George Freeling

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24 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 150.
25 Smith, *Doing the Duty*, p. xii.
26 *Parliamentary Papers 1838*, 1–2 Vict., c. 106, *An Act to Abridge the Holding of Benefices in Plurality*; *Parliamentary Papers 1850*, 13–14 Vict., c. 98, *An Act to Amend the Law Relating to the Holding of Benefices in Plurality*.
27 *Parliamentry Papers 1813*, 53 Geo III, c.149, *An Act for Further Support and Maintenance of Stipendiary Curates*.
28 VRs 1814–38, St Aldate.

was incumbent at St Cross Holywell (1871–92) and St John the Baptist Oxford (1880–92).

Many stipendiary curates were paid only a fraction of the benefice's value. At St Nicholas Marston in 1817, for example, the whole duty was covered by an unnamed curate who resided at Christ Church and was paid £50 plus surplice fees,[29] while the benefice itself was worth £190.[30]

The position of chaplain applies to three churches with an unusual arrangement for the first half of the century. All chapels in University colleges were peculiars, and so not under the authority of Oxford's bishop. Uniquely, the chapel for Merton college was also the parish church of St John the Baptist. Furthermore, although All Saints and St Michael were parish churches, they were served by chaplains from Lincoln college, and so considered to be outside the authority of Oxford's bishop. Early in his episcopate Wilberforce determined that these three churches were nevertheless to be subject to archidiaconal summons and visitations.[31] Lincoln's rector complained that his college's two churches were by ancient rights 'Collegiate Churches', and not parochial; but Wilberforce's commitment to broadening his control over inner-city parishes made him implacable.[32] The first visitations from these three parishes date

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29 VR 1817, Marston; the amount in the 1817 visitation return is higher than the £27/8s/6d reported to parliament in 1818, see *19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers 1818*, (18) no. 004, *Accounts of Population of Benefices or Parishes, and Capacity of Churches and Chapels, in England and Wales, according to Diocesan Returns*, p. 165.

30 Benefices are discussed later in this chapter.

31 Meacham, *Wilberforce*, p. 127.

32 R.R. Martin, *The Church and Parish of St Michael at the Northgate, Oxford* (Oxford: St Michael at the Northgate, 1967), pp. 63–64; complete lists of the nineteenth-century chaplains are recorded in Wilberforce's 1860 survey, returns of which are pasted under the church's name in Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860.

from 1854, and although their ministers were then perpetual curates, some of them continued to protest by signing themselves as 'chaplain' in their visitation returns.[33] These chaplains submitted their first visitation returns in 1854, but where necessary their biographical details have been included in this study in order better to represent the parochial experience of the inner-city parish churches in the first half of the century.

'Assistant' mostly describes assistant curates, but also covers semi-formal arrangements noted in the visitation returns but not recorded elsewhere. The University provided a substantial semi-formal and informal network that impacted the management of duties in the parish throughout the century. In 1802, for example, the incumbent Frederick Barnes at St Thomas wrote that he was receiving 'occasional assistance in the service of duty and weekly prayers' without identifying from whom;[34] in 1805 St Thomas's next incumbent, John Conybeare, noted he was receiving the 'occasional assistance of the chaplain of Christ Church'.[35] Reports on this level of support continue to the end of the century, with Charles Morris noting in 1899 that during a long illness the duty at Marston was shared between four University friends.[36] In 1878 Kemp wrote that he had been without an assistant since February 1877, and was managing with 'occasional help from friends',[37] and in 1896 Stanley Baker, curate at St Mary Oxford, stated that he provided six months informal

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33 In VR 1854, All Saints, for example, Washbourne West struck out the form's printed word 'Incumbent' and wrote over it 'Chaplain'.
34 VR 1802, St Thomas.
35 VR 1805, St Thomas.
36 VR 1899, St Nicholas Marston.
37 VR 1878, St Frideswide.

assistance at St Frideswide,[38] as did Fraser Penny at St Michael in 1890 and 1893, [39] when he unofficially took on substantial duties in the parish to assist officiating minister Andrew Clark, who was writing a scholarly work on Antony Wood.[40]

Alongside semi-formal arrangements deemed significant enough to be recorded in the bishop's visitation returns, there were informal arrangements whereby ministers exchanged pulpits on Sundays, such that sermons could be reused. Visitation returns from other dioceses have also shed light on this practice, with ministers helping neighbouring clergy during illness or a required absence.[41] For example, in 1814 the minister of St Giles, John Natt, wrote in his diary on 18 Sundays over the year that he had exchanged places with someone in his network of friends and associates in nearby parishes.[42]

The 'shared assistant' was a local arrangement peculiar to Oxford. As will be examined in detail further on, nearly all clergy were fellows of a University college. One of the consequences for a fellow taking on the duty of a church was the requirement — unattractive to many — to remain at college during vacation and continue providing services at their parish church. Thus Hawkins, minister at St Mary Oxford, and Newman, curate at St Clement, were the only colleagues living at

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38 VRs 1896, St Mary Oxford and St Frideswide.
39 VRs 1890, 1893, St Michael. Fraser Penny was officially curate at St Giles 1878–88.
40 Andrew Clark, 'Preface', in Andrew Clark, (ed.), *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, at Oxford, 1632–1695*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892) , p. v.
41 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 165.
42 'John Natt's Diary, 1812–28', private collection: printed transcription and tabulated summary by Margaret McWilliamson.

Oriel for several months each year from 1824.[43] But a more common arrangement, particularly in the first half of the century, was for a curate to cover the vacation months, which roughly constituted half the year. Edward Copleston, incumbent of St Mary Oxford in 1802, noted that 'I reside during the University terms and have an assistant curate, who resides in Oxford the rest of the year'. In 1805 Copleston's assistant was officiating on Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as covering the vacation period. At Binsey a 'respectable assistant' was provided during the summer months, for which he was paid £25[44] and at St James Cowley a similar arrangement was in place.[45] At St Cross Holywell an assistant curate was paid £45 in 1814 to cover the many absences of Dyson, who resided in Merton College and only attended his duty 'whenever I am in Oxford'.[46] The curate was often not named, but in every instance in which he can be identified the role was covered by someone from the same college as the incumbent. It was a practice widely followed in the first half of the century — at its peak in 1820 40% of all clergy were operating under the arrangement — but had ceased by 1884.

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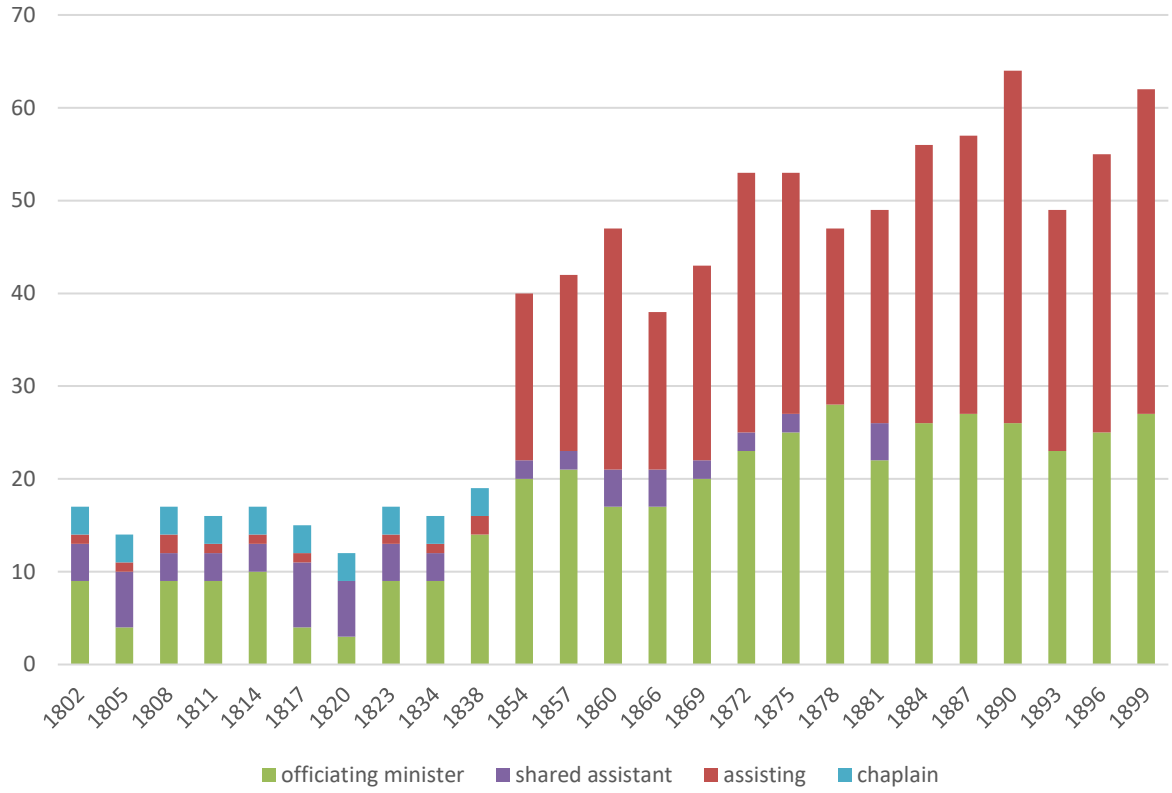
43 David Watson Rannie, *Oriel College* (London: Robinson, 1900), p. 189. It was Hawkins's commitment to his parochial duties, combined with his role as unofficial mentor, that helped soften Newman's Calvinist evangelicalism, drawing him away from evangelical bibliolatry and into a phase of more moderate high churchmanship; see Frank M. Turner, 'Editor's Introduction', in Frank M. Turner, (ed.), *Apologia pro vita sua and Six Sermons* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 78.

44 VRs 1805, 1808, 1817, Binsey.

45 VRs 1805, 1817, St James Cowley.

46 VR 1814, St Cross Holywell.

Graph 3-3 Active clergy: clerical roles refined, 1802–99



Considering that in nearly all instances a shared assistant was only active when the officiating minister was absent, Graph 3-3 is revealing: it corroborates the data of Graph 3-1 (p. 120) and Graph 3-2 (p. 121), but the shared assistants are not added as an extra person and instead overlap their corresponding officiating minister. The result is the most accurate visual picture of a century of formal parochial clergy activity in Oxford as recorded in the visitation returns. The widespread local practice of sharing the duty between two people became much rarer from 1854 and had ceased by 1884. Up to 1838 the number of available clergy remained relatively stable, with an average of 16 individuals active at any one time between 1802 and 1838. From 1854 to 1899 this average rose to over 50 people: more than a threefold increase in personnel. Most of this increase is accounted for by the number of assistant curates: between 1802 and 1838 assistant curates were on average 6.5% of

active clergy; between 1854 and 1899 the percentage rose more than sevenfold to 49%.

This sharp increase in unbeneficed assistant curate numbers in Oxford from the 1840s or 1850s was not unusual, and other studies and nineteenth-century accounts have noted the phenomenon.[47] Although there are eighteenth-century precedents to the position,[48] it was during the 1830s that it started to be more common. For Oxford clergy this was first formally noted in Bagot's 1838 charge, and he announced that he was 'ready to receive the appointment of *Assistant* Curate as a title' on condition that it was in a parish with a high population that required more than one man, and that an 'adequate' stipend was provided.[49]

In other studies several explanations have been used to explain this increase in assistant curates. A correlation between the number of church buildings and the number of assistant curates is supported by data from Ripon, where between 1836 and 1856 the number of assistant curates rose from 297 to 419 (a rise of 41.9%) and the number of churches during that time rose from 307 to 432 (a rise of 40.7%).[50] Gibson explains the increase of assistant curates as an unanticipated consequence of the 1836 Pluralities Act, [51] as does Knight.[52] Writing in 1864, Blunt credited the rise

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47 Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, p. 74.
48 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 160.
49 Bagot, *1838 Charge*, p. 24, his emphasis.
50 Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. vii.
51 William Gibson, T., 'The Professionalization of an Elite: the Nineteenth Century Episcopate', *Albion,* 23/3 (1991), p. 468.
52 Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, p. 122.

in part to the foundation of the Pastoral Aid Society in 1836 and the Additional Curates Society in 1837.[53]

None of these explanations fully accounts for the rise of assistant curates in this study, especially the increase in the 1850s. Between 1838 and 1854 the three new places of worship— chapels of ease in the parishes of St Ebbe (Holy Trinity, 1845), St Mary Magdalen (St George, 1849), and Headington Quarry (Holy Trinity, 1849)[54] — are not enough to account for the increase. No assistant curates in this study were funded by the Pastoral Aid Society or the Additional Curates Society. The Diocesan Spiritual Help Society, established specifically to supply grants for curates, was not founded until 1857, and the first award that contributed to an assistant curate's stipend was in 1869, for E. Peel Garnett at Holy Trinity St Ebbe.[55]

At a Church Congress in 1875 Christopher (rector, St Aldate, 1859–1905) noted that 'A faithful curate is a most precious gift of God to a parish. His stipend is money which goes further in doing the Lord's work, than if it were spent in any other way whatever.' In that context, it was essential, in his mind, that ministers helped raise the kind of curates needed; specifically, what the Church needed was

> curates who will work — who will work for the Lord Jesus with faith, and love, and energy, and self-denial … who will work on patiently in poor and populous parishes, faithfully, wisely, zealously, humbly, in a truly Scriptural manner … who will preach Christ in all the glory of His Divine Person, and in all the perfect, the immediate, the eternal efficacy of His atoning work ; who will beseech sinners … who will say plainly and boldly to our people, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this

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53 John Henry Blunt, *Directorium pastorale: Principles and Practice of Pastoral Work in the Church of England* (London: Rivingtons, 1864).

54 Church extension is discussed in chapter four.

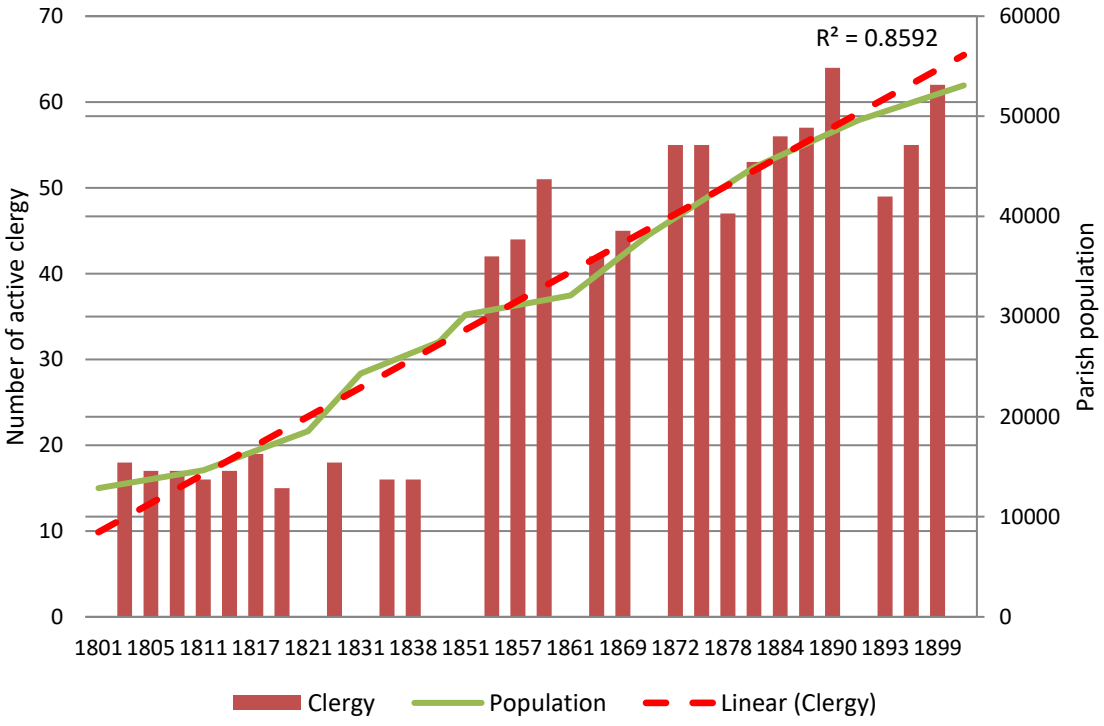
55 VR 1869, Holy Trinity St Ebbe; on the Diocesan Spiritual Help Society see also p. 159.

> Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things."[56]

It will be argued over the course of this chapter and this thesis that another of Blunt's suggestions to explain the increase of assistant curates remains a more probable factor: a 'vigorous revival of pastoral work'.[57]

If the combined population of all parishes in this review is graphed alongside all active clergy, over the course of the century a strong correlation between population growth and an Anglican parochial presence is identified (Graph 3-4).[58] For the first

Graph 3-4 Active clergy compared with parish population, 1801–99



56 A.M.W. Christopher, 'The Supply of Clergy, Through the "Probationer" System or Otherwise', *CC* (1875), p. 419.

57 Blunt, *Directorium pastorale*, p. 405.

58 The measurement of this correlation (its R^2 value) is 0.86 which is very high: an R^2 value is between −1 and 1, where 1 indicates a perfect positive linear association.

decade there was a ratio of about one cleric for every 900 parishioners. Clergy numbers remained relatively static during the 1820s and 30s, resulting in a ratio of churchman to parishioner of about 1:1,625 in 1838.[59] For most of the second half of the century the ratio was lower, sometimes significantly so. During the 1850s the average ratio was 1:682; in the 1860s 1:763, and in the 1870s 1:791; by the 1890s the ratio was similar to the start of the century: 1:928. In terms of provision per person, then, churches were most generously staffed in the 1850s following a decline in the 1830s during which they were the most outnumbered by Oxford's rising population. Bearing in mind the nature of the visitation returns, and that they capture a series of snapshots as opposed to a continuous record, it is informative to note that in Graph 3-4 (p. 130) clergy provision as a linear trend over the century provides an almost perfect correlation with population growth.

Table 3-1 National averages, population per clergyman

Date	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Population per clergyman	1,098	1,035	1,045	1,098	1,199	1,196	1,288

In comparison with figures from England and Wales calculated by Haig from 1841 to 1901 (Table 3-1[60]), the parish churches under review were better provided for than the national average, although — and this is a crucial caveat — it is difficult to calculate how the more accurate figures for clergy numbers taken from the visitation returns in this review make comparisons with other studies less useful. Certainly the ratio of clerical provision to population was much higher than in England's 'larger'

59 Assuming a mostly even population increase between 1831 and 1841.
60 Data taken from Haig, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 3.

parishes, often defined in the nineteenth century as parishes with populations of over 20,000 people, and where a goal of one clergyman for every 2,000 parishioners was considered a worthy target as part of improving spiritual provision in urban centres.[61]

In 1898 and using his own figures, Oxford's rural dean Horace Clayton wrote that while a ratio of 65 clergy for 50,000 parishioners ought to be adequate, he was concerned that clergy were not being appointed to parishes in proportion to population, and that the need for more assistance in the poorer and more densely populated parishes was being overlooked.[62] Evidence in the Oxford returns questions Clayton's assertion. By ranking the 20 parishes in order of population over the century, and counting the clergy within each rank, Clayton's concern is not entirely without merit, although the top 25% of the most populated parishes clearly had more clergy working there (Graph 3-5, p. 133).

Some historians have used the ratio of ministers to population to measure the potential impact a clergyman might make at the local level. Under the rubric John Tomlinson uses in his thesis, for example, any parish with a ratio below 1:2,000 had potential for a minister to hold significant sway within his parish.[63] For Tomlinson, all the Oxford parishes would be categorized 'small', and remained so for the century.

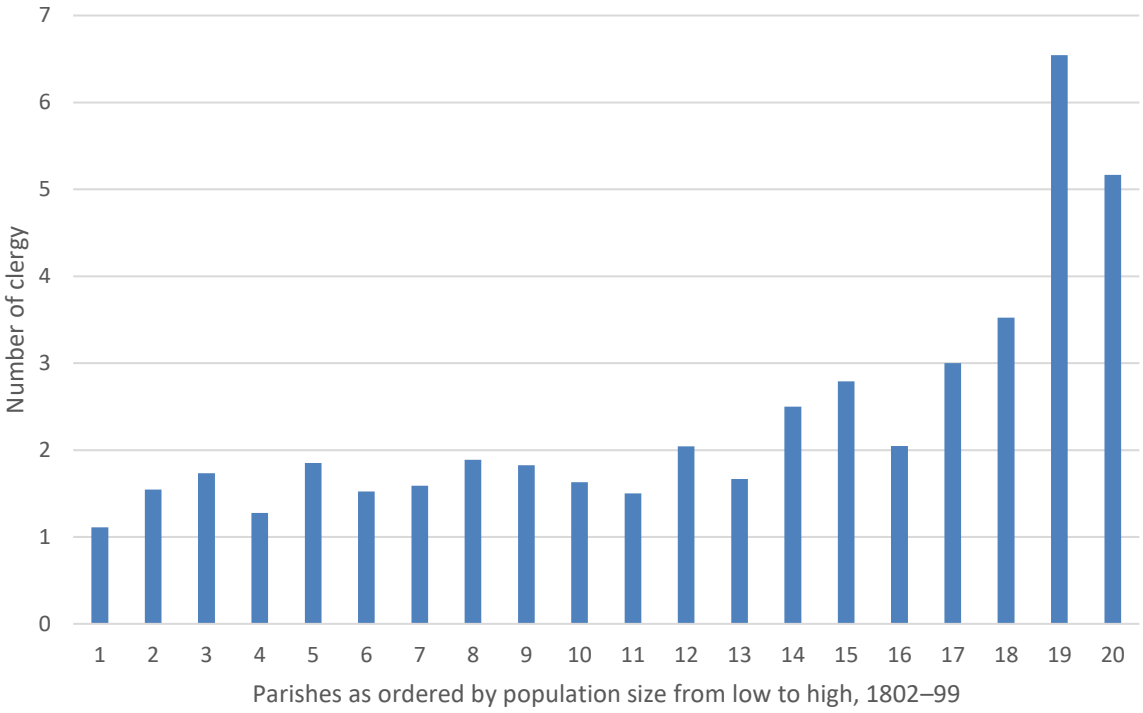
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61 To be achieved through the creation of 'sub-districts': see W. Cadman, 'Management of a Large Parish', *CC* (1863), p. 178; this was also the ratio used by the Ecclesiastical commission in 1836.

62 Clayton, *Spiritual Needs of Oxford*, pp. 8–9.

63 Tomlinson categorizes four parish types: 'the small parish had a ratio less than 1:2,000, and included some parishes where the ratio fell to below 1:50. The medium parish had a

Graph 3-5 Average number of clergy arranged in order from least to most populated parish, 1802–99



Education

That almost all clergy in this study were alumni of the University of Oxford is one of the least surprising deviations from the national average. To study at Oxford required a student to be relatively wealthy, or else receiving financial support. In the mid-1850s a University degree took four years to complete and cost between £370

ratio of 1:2,000 to 1:4,000, and the large parish had a ratio of 1:4,001 to 1:8,000. The fourth type or very large parish with a ratio over 1:8,000 included a few parishes where the ratio exceeded 1:15,000 or more.' John W.B. Tomlinson, 'From Parson to Professional: the Changing Ministry of the Anglican Clergy in Staffordshire, 1830–1960', doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2008, p. 61.

and £450.[64] By the end of the century the cost had risen by about 25%, but because a degree could now be completed in three years the overall cost was much the same.

In an effort to make Oxford more accessible, from 1868 it was possible to enrol as a non-collegiate University member,[65] reducing the cost, according to the rector of St Aldate, to £60 a year.[66] From this time, 25% of the clergy in this review matriculated as University non-collegiate members, although by graduation three quarters of them had moved to a college. These students included the evangelical Charles Pearson (curate St Ebbe, 1886–1900) and Godfray [sic] Bowring (incumbent Holy Trinity St Ebbe 1881–1905), the Anglo-Catholic Alan Coates (curate, St Barnabas 1887–89) and, ultimately, the liberal Edmund Green (curate St Barnabas, 1887–90).[67]

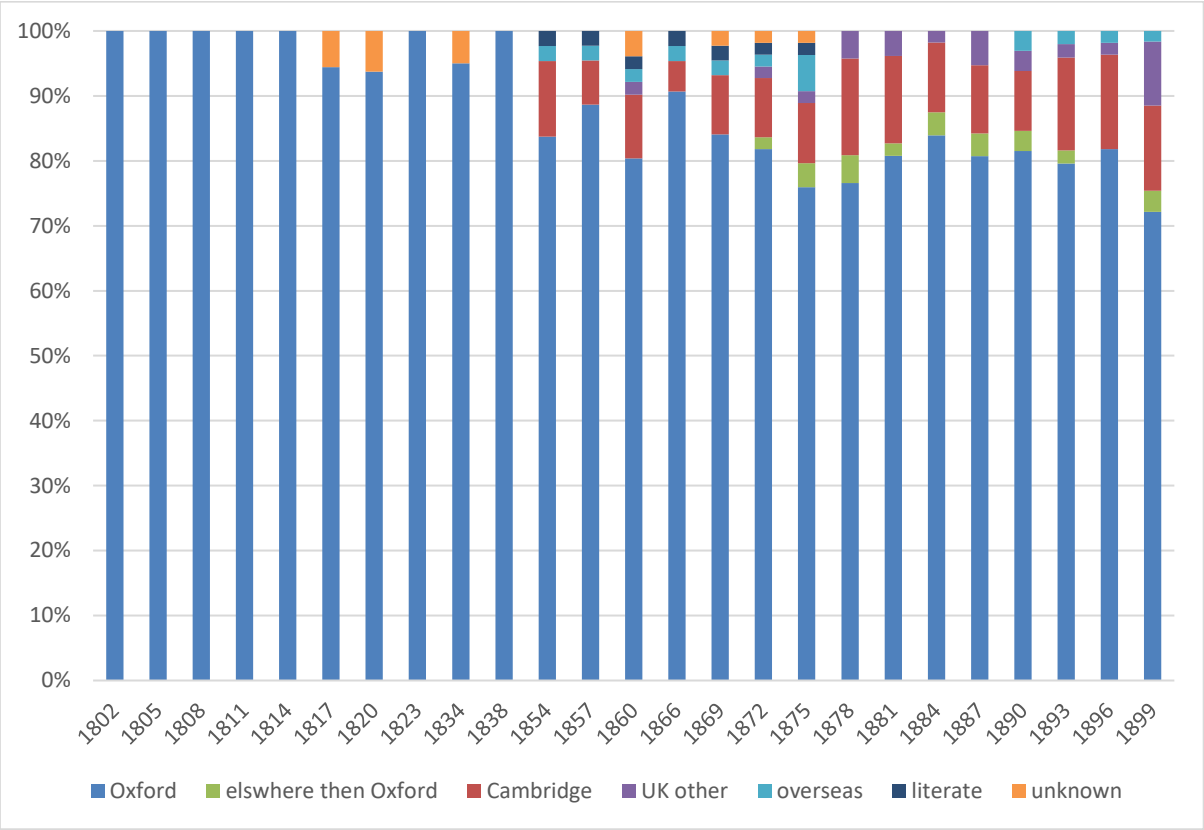
Table 3-2 National figures: ordained clergy educated at the University of Oxford as a percentage (Haig).

1834–43	1844–53	1854–63	1864–73	1872–91	1892–1901
38.8%	32.9%	29.5%	30.5%	29.2%	28.6%

The best available source for national figures on nineteenth-century clergy remains Haig's *The Victorian Clergy*, which includes data on ordained clergy over four periods between 1834 and 1873.[68] His figures, reproduced above (Table 3-2[69]), indicate a gradual decline in clergy who were Oxford alumni from just under 40% in the mid-

64 L.W.B. Brockliss, *The University of Oxford: a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 438.
65 *ibid.*, pp. 367–70.
66 Christopher, 'Supply of Clergy', p. 420.
67 Green moved from Anglo-Catholic to a liberal position supporting disestablishment in 1900; see Geraint H. Jenkins, 'George Eyre Evans', (2009) [ceredigionhistory.wales/george-eyre-evans/, accessed 4 August 2021].
68 Haig, *Victorian Clergy*; Slinn does not measure this statistic in her excellent Sara Slinn, *The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1780–1839* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017).
69 Data taken from table 2.2 in Haig, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 32.

Graph 3-6 Education of clergy as a percentage, 1802–99



1830s to 38.6% by 1901.[70] By the 1890s this decline was noted with some concern, along with proposals for how to reverse the trend.[71]

These national figures are in stark contrast to the Oxford clergy examined here (Graph 3-6). In the first half of the century 100% had studied at Oxford prior to being ordained,[72] while in the second half of the century an average of 17% were educated elsewhere: mostly in Cambridge, with others in Dublin, St Bees Theological

70 *ibid.*; some caution is needed as Haig uses different sources for his 1834–73 data (Convocation of Canterbury Report) and his 1872–1901 data (*Church of England Year-Book)*.

71 A.J. Worlledge, 'Preparation for Deacons' and Priests' Orders II', *CC* (1892), p. 447 [Canon Residentiary and Chancellor of Truro Cathedral].

72 This is ignoring a small number of unknowns, although it is highly probable that the few unidentified clergy from this period also attended the University.

College, or trained privately or overseas before being admitted as literates. Nearly all clergy in this study were individuals who chose either to remain or return to Oxford following undergraduate study. 36% of all clergy took an Oxford position within one year of obtaining their BA and just under 50% within three years,[73] an indication that University patronage gave some fellows relatively early access to incumbencies.

The University's connection to most of the clergy working in Oxford's parishes can be juxtaposed with a period of dysfunction at Headington Quarry. Headington Quarry was a small open village consisting of labourers and artisans, without any middle class or gentry, and its advowson was not owned by any University college.[74] Without a church of their own, residents relied on an 'old and long-established path', to access Headington's church St Andrew.[75] Specifically, the path had for generations been used when a cadaver was carried to the churchyard for burial. Following the 1801/02 Headington Enclosure Award part of the land had been transferred from common land to private property, and the new owner, as well as erecting a substantial house on the grounds, built a stone wall that made the funeral path inaccessible. For Headington's curate the wall was 'a kind of insult against Religion and the Church itself',[76] but his fruitless efforts to resolve the dispute led to ill will between the Headington Quarry parishioners and the city's religious establishments — the University and Church of England — and the effects of the dispute lasted for

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73 Calculated from my own data.
74 Mason, 'Headington Quarry c. 1820–1860: a Study of a 19th-Century Open Village', p. 376.
75 James Palmer, OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers 657: letter to bishop, 3 March 1805, f. 21r.
76 *Ibid.*

over 70 years.[77] Following several incidents, including part of the wall being broken down at least three times, the barrier rebuilt and the perpetrators prosecuted, Headington Quarry invited a Methodist minister to provide services for their hamlet, thus obviating the need to attend Headington St Andrew.[78] When an Anglican church was finally built at Headington Quarry in 1849 awareness that its parishioners had 'suffered grievously from the neighbourhood of the University situation' remained acute,[79] and the decision deliberately to appoint ministers who had not studied at Oxford was a strategic move to reduce the risk of a new minister being negatively associated with the earlier dispute. As a result, of the ten men working at Holy Trinity in the second half of the nineteenth century, eight were alumni from the University of Cambridge or St Bees.

Patronage and Church party

At the national and county level private patronage comprised the largest category of ecclesiastical ownership: in the country at mid-century just over 50%[80] and in Oxfordshire over 40% of advowsons were privately owned.[81] It was because more than half of the country's parishes were under the control of the laity that career

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77 See for example VR 1866, Headington Quarry, where difficulties are attributed by the minister to 'the state of neglect and serious heathenism in which the greater part of the older inhabitants appear to have grown up'; see also VRs 1854–75, Holy Trinity Headington Quarry.

78 This possibility had been considered from the start of their disputes; Palmer, OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers 657: letter to bishop, 3 March 1805, f. 21v.

79 Samuel Wilberforce, LPL, ICBS 4061: letter to ICBS committee, 6 June 1848.

80 Mann, *1851 Religious Census*, p. 12; interestingly, the 1851 calculations were identical to the figures in the much-maligned John Wade, *The Extraordinary Black Book: an Exposition of Abuses in Church and State, Courts of Law, Representation, Municipal and Corporate Bodies*, new edn (London: Effingham Wilson, 1832), p. 22, where results from the 1821 population census were used.

81 46.6% in 1777 and 42.3% in 1869; see McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, p. 3.

paths resulting in a benefice were more numerous and varied than that of other professions, such as the judiciary.[82] Indeed, private patronage was often critiqued in contemporary literature for turning spiritual appointments into commodities sold or passed along for personal profit and/or political gain.[83] But in the parishes under review private ownership was the exception: in 1800 only the parishes of Headington and Marston fell into this nationally important and complex category.[84]

Table 3-3 (p. 139) shows the patronage of each place of worship, arranged by visitation date and classified into five types of ownership: institution, University, Crown, Church patron, and private patron. From this it is clear that local factors in Oxford diverted patronage of the parishes away from national and county averages.[85] The relationship between an Oxford college and a specific church was often historical, and the parish church might have served as a substitute chapel when the college was without a chapel of its own in the early stages of its foundation.[86] In 1800 nearly two thirds of advowsons were

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82 Gibson, 'Professionalization of an Elite', p. 460.

83 See for example Wade, *Extraordinary Black Book*, pp. 23–26.

84 From 1806 until 1879 in Headington and Marston the patron and the incumbent presented were the same person, the lord of the manor Whorwood. By the nineteenth century the political influence of lords of the manor in Headington had shrunk almost entirely to the local sphere, and by the 1850s duties in the churches at Headington and Marston were usually performed by a stipendiary curate; see VRs for Headington and Marston; see also Stephanie Jenkins, 'The Vicar of St Andrew's Church, Headington and his Sons', [www.headington.org.uk/history/famous_people/whorwood_thomas.pdf; accessed 4 May 2018].

85 For McClatchey this is why she excludes nearly all the Oxfordshire parishes covered in this study; for details see McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, p. v.

86 *Oxford University Commission 1852*, (22) no. 1482, *Report ... into the State, Discipline, Studies, and Revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford, together with the Evidence* [statement of Mr Goldwin Smith, p. 2].

Table 3-3 Ownership of advowsons with start dates, arranged by date and grouped together (mostly) by patron type

Colour legend	Institution: University					Institution: other				Crown				Church patron					Private patron				
Visitation date	1802	1805	1808	1811	1814	1817	1820	1823	1834	1838	1848	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869	1872	1875	1878	1881	1884	1887	1890	1893	1896	1899
St Margaret Binsey	Christ Church																										
St James Cowley	Christ Church																										
St Mary Magdalen	Christ Church																										
St George (chapel of ease)													Christ Church (1849)														
Iron Church Cowley St John															Christ Church (1859)								(church closed 1884)				
SS Mary and John Cowley St John																							Society of St John (1884)				
St Thomas the Martyr	Christ Church																										
All Saints Oxford	Lincoln College																										
St Michael's in the Northgate	Lincoln College																										
St Cross Holywell	Merton College																										
St Peter in the East	Merton College							Crown (1837) →			Merton College (1841)																
St John the Baptist Oxford	Merton College																									(church closed 1891)	
St Mary the Virgin Oxford	Oriel College																										
St Giles	St John's College																										
St John the Baptist Summertown									St John's College (1832)																		
SS Philip and James															St John's College (1862)												
St Margaret North Oxford																							St John's College (1896) →				
St Aldate	Pembroke College														Simeon's Trust (1859)												
St Matthew Grandpont																										Simeon's Trust (1891)	
St Clement	Crown															Oxford Trust (1864)											
St Peter-le-Bailey	Crown															Oxford Trust (1864)											
St Ebbe	Crown															Oxford Trust (1864)											
Holy Trinity (chapel of ease)													Crown (1845)			Oxford Trust (1864)											
St Martin (Carfax)	Crown																							Bishop of Oxford (1886)			(church closed)
St Mary the Virgin Iffley	Oxford Archdeacon																										
St Paul									Bishop of Oxford (1831)																		
Holy Trinity Headington Quarry													Bishop of Oxford (1849)														
St Barnabas																	Coombe (1869)	Bishop of Oxford (1872)					Keble College (1886)				
St Frideswide New Osney																			Christ Church (1872)								
SS Mary and Nicholas Littlemore															Oriel College (half shared with private patron from 1847)												
															Charles Crawley and then the Crawley family (half shared with college from 1847)													
St Andrews Headington	Whorwood family																								Mrs Rawlinson (1879)		
St Nicholas Marston	Whorwood family																								Rev. E. Evens and family (1888)		

owned by Oxford colleges, and by 1900 institutional ownership accounted for over 75% of the parishes, of which over two thirds remained in the hands of various colleges. The dean and chapter of Christ Church held four advowsons in 1800 and five by 1900,[87] and St John's College owned four advowsons by 1900. Collegiate ownership was not limited to the urban parishes: Binsey, Cowley, Summertown, and half of Littlemore[88] also fell under Oxford college ownership.

By the nineteenth century the parish churches for which colleges owned the advowson did not necessarily have a strong connection with the college itself, and, especially in the first half of the century, were often treated as assets. Most colleges had their own chapel and chaplain to provide religious services for students and fellows; institutions that had no chapel could in any case conduct religious services elsewhere on their own site. At St Alban Hall in the 1830s and 40s, for example, prayers were held in the main hall once on a weekday and twice on Sundays, and students attended St Peter in the East once a term for communion.[89] Indeed, performing the service in an unconsecrated space such as a dining hall was appreciated because of the latitude it gave the Principal to supplement the official prayer book with a different liturgy and other spiritual exercises.[90] Pembroke sold its patronage of St Aldate in 1859 based on its assessment that the poor state of the

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87 Although technically owned by the dean and chapter of Christ Church, revenues and outgoings of the cathedral church and college were inseparable, a complication acknowledged by the commissioners; see Report of the Commissioners Appointed by His Majesty to Inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales (1835), p. 20.

88 The parish advowson of Littlemore was shared between Oriel college and the Crawley family until 1939; see *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 5, pp. 206–14.

89 Henry Robinson, 'St Alban Hall, Oxford', in Lilian M. Quiller Couch, (ed.), *Reminiscences of Oxford by Oxford Men, 1559–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 347.

90 Sidney Graves Hamilton, *Hertford College* (London: F.E. Robinson and Co., 1903), p. 111.

buildings and the low emolument made for an unattractive investment,[91] but this was not a pattern adopted by other colleges until the very end of the century, when bursars began facilitating sales to help finance college pension funds.[92]

When Wilberforce assumed the see in 1845 the bishop of Oxford controlled only nine benefices in the entire diocese. This was not exceptional: in Northampton, for example, Bishop Magee had less than 10 per cent of the livings in his gift and wanted to set up a special commission on the issue.[93] Wilberforce desired greater parochial influence, especially in larger town parishes, and being able to appoint clergy of his own choice was an important step towards achieving this. His determination to acquire more advowsons underscores the degree to which he considered a minister could impact his parish and advance a bishop's goals, and his strategy was one many other bishops followed.[94] To that end, he had acquired advowsons for 95 parishes by the time he resigned the see in 1869: a remarkable increase.[95]

The bishop was not the only person with an interest in acquiring advowsons. The nineteenth-century pattern of buying advowsons from the Crown marked the tail-end of a long trend,[96] and strategic purchases in 1864 of Crown-owned parishes by the newly formed Oxford Evangelical Trust reinforced their influence. Nineteenth-

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91 J.S. Reynolds, *Canon Christopher of St Aldate's, Oxford* (Abingdon: Abbey Press, 1967), p. 90.

92 J.P.D. Dunbabin, 'Finance and Property', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 378.

93 Hatley, *Church in Northampton*, pp. xi–xii.

94 Haig, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 249.

95 Arthur Rawson Ashwell, *Life of the Right Reverend Samuel Wilberforce*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1880), vol. 1, pp. 312, 351–52.

96 Mark Smith, 'The Church of England in 1835', in Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 2010), p. 132.

century evangelical trusts acquiring advowsons was not an uncommon occurrence, and had taken place in large market or industrial towns such as Hull, Birmingham, and Manchester.[97] Since the liberal-conservative Lord Chancellor Richard Bethell was deemed unlikely to provide the necessary support for such a sale,[98] the advowsons were acquired surreptitiously by separate individuals and not for the trust outright.[99] At the time of purchase Tractarian S.Y.N. Griffith was at St Ebbe (curate 1860–68), and broad churchman John Darby was incumbent at St Clement (1861–78). St Peter-le-Bailey had for a short time been under Tractarian influence (W.B. Heathcote, 1843–46). The evangelical aspiration was for these three inner-city parishes to form a strategic block that would recruit and model evangelical values to University students. Furthermore, St Aldate (and in 1891 its chapel of ease St Matthew) had been acquired from Pembroke College in 1859 by the Simeon Trust, an endowment established in 1832 with the same objective of buying parishes for the appointment of evangelical clergy.[100] With evangelicalism in decline in the colleges in the second half of the nineteenth century,[101] by the 1870s University members were being described as '"High church" , "Broad church", or "No church", [as] the "Low

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97 Rod W. Ambler, 'Evangelicals and the Establishment: Evangelical Identity in a Nineteenth-Century Market Town', in Mark Smith, (ed.), *British Evangelical Identities Past and Present* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), p. 74.

98 R.C.J. Cocks, 'Bethell, Richard', in *ODNB* [online edn, May 2009; accessed 4 May 2018].

99 John Stewart Reynolds, *The Evangelicals at Oxford, 1735–1871* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 139.

100 Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 89. Reynolds's account that when Wilberforce learnt of the sale he reportedly rushed to Pembroke to offer a higher bid, only to learn it had already been sold for £1,000 seems unlikely, considering the strong friendship that existed between himself and Simeon, see W. Balda, '"Spheres of influence": Simeon's Trust and its Implications for Evangelical Patronage', doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1981, pp. 128–30.

101 Reynolds, *Evangelicals at Oxford*, p. 146.

Church" party finds no considerable place among us'.[102] The article notes that the only places where evangelical Anglicanism could be found was in Oxford's parish churches, an observation repeated 70 years later.[103]

Another set of parish churches adhering to an Anglo-Catholic style of worship developed more organically. Ministers looking to establish a church with a strong ceremonial style of worship preferred moving to new churches without a well-established congregation likely to resist change.[104] In Oxford this meant nearly all its more ritualist churches were new or in the city's suburbs: St Paul, SS Mary and Nicholas Littlemore, St Barnabas, SS Philip and James, St Margaret, and the Iron Church.[105] The Society of St John was formed in 1866, under the leadership of Richard Benson, when a group of men committed themselves to living under a monastically inspired Rule of living, but in an urban setting.[106] Heavily influenced by Tractarian theology, the Society acquired the advowson of the parish when its constitution was formally drawn up in 1884. The building of St Barnabas had been entirely funded by Tractarian Thomas Coombe and from its consecration established itself as a centre of ritualism. By providing a glebe house where the minister and

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102 'The University Church Society', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (18 October 1877), pp. 10–11.

103 Arthur Cleveland Downer, *A Century of Evangelical Religion in Oxford* (London: Church Book Room, 1938), pp. 5–27.

104 For an account of this in the Oxford parishes see Simon Lancaster, 'Church of England Ritualism in Suburban Oxford, 1842–1906', master's thesis, University of Oxford, 2013.

105 St Thomas was the clear exception; for more details on why nineteenth-century ritualism in Oxford was primarily a suburban occurrence see *ibid.*

106 Serenhedd James, *The Cowley Fathers: a History of the English Congregation of the Society of St John the Evangelist* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2019), pp. 50–70; and Rowan Strong, 'Origins of Anglo-Catholic Missions: Fr Richard Benson and the Initial Missions of the Society of St John the Evangelist, 1869–1882', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 66/1 (2015), pp. 94–95.

curates communed, they were able to emulate a similar pattern to the Cowley fathers, albeit on a more modest scale.[107] The transfer of patronage from the bishop of Oxford to Keble in 1886 served to further secure its identity as an Oxford Movement church.[108] In the eighteenth century, Merton college chapel — also the parish church of St John the Baptist — had been open to a more ceremonial form of Anglican worship than was followed elsewhere in Oxford. This tradition continued into the nineteenth century,[109] as indeed it did at another Merton church, St Cross Holywell.

From the 1830s to the early 1840s party tension at Oxford was high, with the Tractarians particularly targeting the junior members of the University.[110] With the publication of Tract 90 in 1841 the Tractarian movement had left the local Church in virtual disarray. Newman, withdrawing to Littlemore in 1844, published a retraction of previous hardline statements against the Roman Catholic church and seceded in 1845. The appointment of James Garbett to the chair of poetry in 1841 divided the University, with all parties considering poetry and theology inseparable.[111] In 1843 Pusey preached a sermon at Christ Church on the Eucharist: though it may have passed without notice at any other time,[112] such was the hostile environment that Pusey was suspended from preaching for two years. And the Martyrs' Memorial,

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107 Arthur Tilney Bassett, *S. Barnabas', Oxford: a Record of Fifty Years* (London: A.R. Mowbray and Co., 1919), pp. 32–33.

108 Keble College exchanged St Martin for St Barnabas with Bishop Stubbs in 1886.

109 Mark Everitt, 'Merton Chapel in the Nineteenth Century', *Oxoniensia,* 42 (2006).

110 Heather Ellis, *Generational Conflict and University Reform: Oxford in the Age of Revolution* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

111 Peter Benedict Nockles, '"Lost Causes and ... Impossible Loyalties": the Oxford Movement and the University', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 245.

112 *ibid.*, pp. 248–49.

originally conceived as a cross-party enterprise in 1838, had become divisive, with the Tractarians withdrawing support and the project attracting more extreme anti-Catholic elements in the city.[113]

It is often observed that after 1845, in Oxford there was for a period of time a distinct settling down of party disputes, 'a great lull in controversy'.[114] From the mid-1840s a pressing local issue — the urgent need for more burial space — helped galvanize Oxford's church leaders and unite them in a way that almost nothing else could. In 1843–44 the Oxford City Council had formed a General Cemetery Committee (GCC)[115] to establish a single large cemetery about a mile north of St Giles to be run by the council or a joint stock company.[116] This had been done effectively in the Low Hill General Cemetery in Liverpool in 1825, which for some time had been paying average dividends of 12.5%, at the time one of the highest investment returns available.[117]

Very early on the church leaders withdrew from the GCC en masse and formed a rival Oxford Parish Burial Grounds Committee. The clergy were deeply opposed to the GCC's proposals: the entrepreneurial nature of a general cemetery was 'abhorrent',[118] un-English,[119] and eroded the parochial system, which was their 'guiding

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113 *ibid.*, p. 236; see also Andrew Atherstone, 'The Martyr's Memorial at Oxford', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 54/2 (2003).

114 G.W. Gent, 'Religious Life at Oxford', in J. Wells, (ed.), *Oxford and Oxford Life*, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1899), p. 120; see also Andrew Atherstone, *Oxford's Protestant Spy: The Controversial Career of Charles Golightly* (Bletchley: Paternoster, 2007), p. 163; William Reginald Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1965), p. 128.

115 'Oxford Cemeteries Committee: Minutes', OHC, OCA c.2.5, 1843–1844 [24 November 1843].

116 Sub-Committee of the General Cemetery Society, *Report* (Oxford: F. Trash, 1844), p. 7.

117 James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 42.

118 Oxford Parish Burial Ground Committee, *Statement*, pp. 5–6.

119 *Ibid.,* p. 4.

principle'.[120] With support from their bishop and many University members[121] the clergy had by May 1848 raised £4,565,[122] and by the autumn of 1848 three new burial grounds had been consecrated and began to be used,[123] leaving the GCC without recourse. For that there was more than one reason, but alongside the oft-cited explanation of a rising liberal revival filling the space left by retreating Tractarian clergy,[124] the burial grounds gave the local clergy an opportunity to bring together a fragmented church and re-establish its credentials with the local community.

In that light, it is educative to note that party issues are barely mentioned in the visitation returns. Studies and surveys of Oxford's parish churches are often delineated along party lines with a focus on the evangelical and Anglo-Catholic churches, but doing so is an oversimplification that overlooks the wider spectrum of Anglican church activity that was taking place. It is correct that in the middle of the century some Anglican members maintained strong religious convictions they considered necessary and incompatible with beliefs from any other Church party; from mid-century these were most often characterised as low/evangelical, broad/liberal, or high/Tractarian/Anglo-Catholic, especially following Conybeare's

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120 Oxford Parish Burial Ground Committee, *Statement*, p. 14.

121 OHC, OCA c.2.3.dd: printed copy of resolutions for public circulation on providing additional burial ground for the several parishes of Oxford, 16 January 1844.

122 'Oxford Parish Burial Grounds', OHC, PAR209/12/F1/1: 1848–9 subscription list, 1849.

123 'Osney Cemetery', *Oxford Chronicle* (16 September 1848), p. 2.

124 W.R. Ward, 'From Tractarians to the Executive Commission, 1854–1854', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

1855 article.[125] But alongside such a schematic classification many ministers — probably a majority — considered being categorized a 'party man' unwelcome, and it was usual for clergy to maintain and express religious beliefs that, when combined, did not entirely align with any single party.[126]

At St Mary Oxford in 1873, Fletcher, then curate at St Mary Magdalen Oxford, preached that 'sectarian pride shuts up our sympathies and activities within one church or school of thought and makes us cold, if not hostile and unjust, to those outside.'[127] In any case, for most clergy their theological beliefs manifested as a religious cultural expression that changed over time, as their own tastes interacted with wider cultural fluctuations. For that reason, and because of the great influence the officiating minister wielded, parish church communities are also difficult to compartmentalize along party lines.

For example, the ritualist William Duggan, minister at St Paul, was described in his obituary as 'belonging to the orthodox High Church party' but 'nevertheless had broad and tolerant views on questions of doctrine, ritual, and church government, so that St Paul's pulpit has from time to time been occupied, at his suggestion, by representatives of the evangelical church, and on the other hand, by extreme high

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125 William John Conybeare, 'Church Parties', in *Essays Ecclesiastical and Social* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855); for a study and modern edition see Arthur Burns, 'W. J. Conybeare: "Church Parties"', in Stephen Taylor, (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson: a Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1999), pp. 213–386.

126 The usefulness of viewing issues such as service times and number of sermons by church party is considered in chapter five.

127 C.J.H. Fletcher, 'The Oxford Pulpit: Filial Humility and Sectarian Pride', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (27 February 1873), pp. 1–2.

churchmen, such as the Cowley Fathers.'[128] At the supposed opposite end of the spectrum from Duggan, the same was noted of the evangelical Christopher at St Aldate, where

> High and Broad, as well as Low Churchmen, have all, at times, found themselves in the Large Room at S. Aldate's Rectory, and have gazed with interest at attentive rows of undergraduates, whose faces would indeed have been strange at churches of a different school, but whose numbers and enthusiasm impressed one with a sense of strength.[129]

When high churchman William West Jones left Summertown, after ministering there for ten years, to become bishop of Cape Town, his departure was mourned by 'Church folk and nonconformists … animated by one feeling, and its expression has been all but universal in the village.'[130] John Burgon (vicar, 1863–76, St Mary Oxford), a high churchman, is remembered today mostly for his 1888 book *Lives of Twelve Good Men* alongside vehement objections and pamphleteering against ritualism, rationalism, and liberalism.[131] But his summary of worship at Oxford in the mid-1860s reveals a pragmatic and accommodating attitude:

> Those who are drawn by simple piety and Apostolic earnestness, go to St. Paul's. Those who are attracted by self-denying zeal, and missionary enthusiasm, resort to Mr Chamberlain's or Mr Benson's ministrations. The lovers of a yet more ornate Service, walk out as far as to St Philip and St James'. Those who must have music in perfection, go to Merton. St Peter's in the East pleases by the simple propriety of its method: the same parochial charm (Mr Rivington) draws men to St Giles'. There will always be some who, not content with the sincere milk of the Word, resort to the faithful ministrations of those good men, Mr Christopher and Mr Linton, for the

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128 'Death of the Vicar of St Paul's', *JOJ* (27 February 1904).

129 G.W. Gent, 'The Religious Life', in A.M.M. Stedman, (ed.), *Oxford: its Life and Schools* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1887).

130 'Public Worship Regulation Bill', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (4 June 1874), pp. 108–09; on his churchmanship see S.B. Barnard, 'Jones, William West (1838–1908)', in *ODNB* [online edn, September 2004; accessed 11 August 2021].

131 G. Martin Murphy, 'Burgon, John William', in *ODNB* [online edn, October 2019; accessed 3 August 2021].

> cream. What wonder if several, in summer especially, walk out into the country and attend a village Service?[132]

Secession from one type of Christian expression to another further complicates categorisation along party lines. The most celebrated case was Newman, who, as a key leader in the Oxford Movement, seceded to Rome in 1845, but he was by no means alone. Other seceders lived through more complicated phases of religious conviction. For example, Arthur Hutton, curate at St Paul 1871–73, moved from Anglo-Catholicism to Roman Catholicism under Newman's influence in 1876; he then became a self-described agnostic and freethinker before returning to the Church of England in 1898, and becoming rector of Bow Church in London from 1902 until his death in 1912.[133]

From the middle of the century, within the University much of the conflict between 'catholic' and 'liberal' Anglicanism had been headed by Pusey and Jowett, but Pusey's death in 1882 took away from the University a powerful conservative force, and can be seen as marking an end to an era of intractable and unbending disagreement.[134] Liddon's death in 1890 was the loss of another influential Tractarian voice within Oxford.

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132 John William Burgon, *The Oxford Sunday: a Letter to Mr Sandford* (Oxford: James Parker, 1866), p. 13; Burgon considered the count of a third of Oriel's undergraduates attending a parish service to be unusually low because the popular Pusey was preaching a University sermon that morning at St Mary Oxford, and so drew students away for that Sunday.

133 'Hutton, Arthur Wollaston', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12th edn (London, 1922); reports that he reconverted to Roman Catholicism on his deathbed are without clear evidence.

134 Peter Bingham Hinchliff, 'Religious Issues, 1879–1914', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 97.

Wealth

Until the 1871 Universities Tests Act nearly all University fellows were required to become a clerk in holy orders, making them eligible for taking on a cure. Well-paid livings owned by colleges were coveted by their members, and their widespread locations across the nation established college 'outposts' throughout the country.[135] Colleges could treat these wealthy advowsons as assets offered exclusively to their fellows as a means of supplying a living. None of the parishes under review, however, was well-paid or highly sought after. Most were at the opposite end of the lucrative spectrum, and had been for some time. With the parishes literally alongside the colleges, the purpose of these poorer livings underwent a transformation over the course of the nineteenth century, from being a commodity held by a fellow until something better came along, to being a religious asset that could model to University students and the city at large the value of the parochial system.

A simple way to calculate the monetary value of a living up to 1832 is to check whether the parish qualified for the Queen Anne's Bounty (later labelled parliamentary funds). Eligibility for this required net income to be below £10 until 1747, £20 until 1788, £30 until 1810, and £50 until 1832 (the latest award considered).[136] Reviewing awards provides a simple means of identifying parishes

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135 Mark C. Curthoys, 'The "Unreformed" Colleges', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 171.

136 Data for Oxford up to 1825 from Christopher Hodgson, *An Account of the Augmentation of Small Livings* (London: F. and J. Rivington, 1826), pp. 406–10; later data from Christopher Hodgson, *An Account of the Augmentation of Small Livings*, 2nd edn (London: F. and J. Rivington, 1845), pp. 322–25 [discrepancies of date by up to one year exist between the two editions].

with a maximum possible net stipend of between £10 and £50 (see Table 3-4, p. 152). Between 1705 and 1832 eleven parishes had qualified by lot,[137] and the patronage of these poorest benefices was a mix of private, collegiate, and crown advowsons. Parishes could be worth less than the threshold required for eligibility: in 1806, for example, St Thomas's patron Christ Church was providing only £10. With £10 for surplice fees and £4 for a lent sermon, the £24 total was a remarkably impoverished benefice by contemporary standards,[138] although by 1824 it had risen to 'scarcely' £80.[139] In a parliamentary survey of about 11,700 livings in England conducted only a few years later, fewer than 7% had livings of under £50.[140] Visitation returns from other parts of the country map a general increase in wealth over the second half of the eighteenth century, in part owing to tithe commutation and enclosure,[141] but that is not evidenced at Oxford, where from the start of the nineteenth century many livings remained particularly poorly paid.

For the purposes of this study, the best sources for comparing the value of livings over the century are the 1835 parliamentary reports examining ecclesiastical revenues (listing a minister's average earnings by parish 1829–31)[142] and the three visitation returns from the 1890s which, for the first time, required the officiating

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137 Binsey and Cowley St James received the Queen Anne Bounty, but with an award linked to a benefactor, and so had no minimum requirement.

138 OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers c.449: St Thomas terrier, 1806.

139 John Jones, 'Respecting Case of St Thomas', LPL, ICBS 554 (b) 2: letter to ICBS, 18 Oct 1825, f. 17.

140 *Parliamentry Papers, House of Lords Debate*, 1 June 1809, vol. 14 cc 830–32, *King's Message Respecting the Clergy*.

141 Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xlvii.

142 For a brief county-wide survey of this parliamentary report see Smith, 'Historical Atlas', pp. 132–33.

Table 3-4 Queen Anne Bounty by lot: award values to 1840 (maximum net income calculated by eligibility)

Parish: patron type	1733	1750	1753	1756	1757	1759	1764	1769	1770	1786	1787	1791	1809	1810	1812	1813	1814	1816	1820	1821	1824	1825	1827	1832
Headington St Andrew: private																		£200 (£50)			£200 (£50)			
Iffley St Mary: Archdeacon					£200 (£20)							£200 (£30)		£200 (£30)			£200 (£50)							
Marston: private patron			£200 (£20)									£200 (£30)		£200 (£30)										
Oxford St Clement: Crown																						£400 (£50)		
Oxford St Cross: University									£200 (£20)															
Oxford St Ebbe: Crown	£200 (£10)							£200 (£20)		£200 (£20)				£200 (£30)		£200 (£50)								
Oxford St Giles: University							£200 (£20)															£200 (£50)		£200 (£50)
Oxford St Martin: Crown		£200 (£20)	£200 (£20)							£200 (£20)			£200 (£30)										£200 (£50)	
Oxford St Peter in the East: University						£200 (£20)									£600 (£50)									
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey: Crown		£200 (£20)		£200							£200 (£20)	£200				£1400 (£50)			£200 (£50)					
Oxford St Thomas: University															£600 (£50)					£400 (£50)	£200 (£50)			

minister to present a breakdown of his earnings to calculate gross and net income.

Because there is no single agreed formula for calculating net income it is always difficult to calculate like-for-like, but in this instance both sets follow the main variables, such as surplice fees (included), and stipends for assisting curates (not included). Parish values published in lists such as *Clergy Lists* or *Crockfords*, or in trade directories, fall short of the detail and potential accuracy of the parliamentary averages or the visitation returns.[143]

In 1829–31 the average income in the parishes under review was £108, rising to £208 over the 1890s (Table 3-5, p. 154). In 1830 most Oxford benefices fell below £150, widely regarded by historians to be the minimum a person could earn in the nineteenth century and maintain respectability, and none rose over the £250 that provided personal comfort. Comparing the income of these two timeframes is difficult, and adjusted figures should be interpreted cautiously. But taking this into account, and if the incomes 1829–31 are adjusted according to the wage indexes of the 1899 pound (Column B),[144] it appears that the value of most of the benefices in the 1890s had increased very little, and some had diminished in value. Using the same index, on average the 1829–31 numbers are higher than those from the 1890s.

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143 This was a problem the editor of *Crockfords* acknowledged, citing an example of one parish with a gross income of £2323 but a net income of £273; see 'Preface', in *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1901* (London: Horace Cox, 1901), pp. xiv–xv.

144 Cost converted to 1899 values at www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/. [www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare; accessed 3 March 2018]; this online calculator uses more nuanced and complete indexes than the widely used tables available in Mitchell and Jones' 1971 *Abstract of British Historical Studies*.

Table 3-5 Earnings: benefices, 1829–31 and 1890–99

Parish	Column A Average: 1829–31[145]	Column B 1831 (1899)[146]	Column C Average: 1890, 1896, 1899[147]
Binsey St Margaret	£90	(£185)	£63
Cowley St James	£64	(£132)	£180
Cowley St John: St Mary and St John	n/a		£297
Headington St Andrew	£118	(£243)	£168
Headington Quarry: Holy Trinity	n/a		£125
Iffley St Mary the Virgin	£37	(£76)	£246
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	n/a		£209
Marston St Nicholas	£195	(£402)	£136
Oxford All Saints	£65	(£134)	£277
Oxford SS Philip and James	n/a		£208[148]
Oxford St Aldate	£164	(£338)	£257
Oxford St Barnabas	n/a		£292
Oxford St Clement	£92	(£189)	£265
Oxford St Cross Holywell	£80	(£165)	£158
Oxford St Ebbe	£111	(£229)	£269
Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity	n/a		£223
Oxford St Giles	£160	(£330)	£177
Oxford St Margaret	n/a		£122
Oxford St Martin (Carfax)	£62	(£128)	£84[149]
Oxford St Mary	£38	(£78)	£142
Oxford St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	£145	(£299)	£304
Oxford St Michael	£100	(£206)	£214
Oxford St Paul	n/a		£131
Oxford St Peter in the East	£147	(£303)	£203
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	£104	(£214)	£307
Oxford St Thomas the Martyr	£105	(£216)	£234
Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	n/a		£350
Summertown St John the Baptist	n/a		£196
Average	£108	(£224)	£208

145 *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by His Majesty to Inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales,* 1835, from final section with summary tables, p. 48

146 1829–31 income adjusted by wage index to the 1899 pound at www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/. Amounts in red highlight benefices that by this calculation were lower in the 1890s than 1829–31.

147 Calculated from the visitation returns for each parish.

148 Calculated from the visitation returns for 1896 and 1899 only.

149 Calculated from the visitation return for 1890 only.

Lower paid livings from the second half of the century follow a pattern found in parishes of many other nineteenth-century urban centres.[150] By the 1860s the value of urban advowsons in the country as a whole was so low that most private patrons had resigned them to public patrons. Indeed, by this time the overall number of privately owned benefices in densely populated areas had become negligible.[151] By the 1890s rural parishes were also being affected: the agricultural depression reduced the price of corn which in turn lowered the rent-charge paid in lieu of tithes, and the rent money earned through land endowments reduced 50%–70%.[152]

Although the overall value of the livings in the final decade was very low, a significant expense for the incumbent not deducted from the net value was the stipend for the growing number of assistant curates working for the parish. By the final decade of the century the number of assistant curates was 27 in 1890, 32 in 1896, and 40 in 1899. In 1899 St John Cowley had five curates, although this was only financially possible because two worked as volunteers.[153]

Table 3-6 Clergy earnings: beneficed and non-beneficed, 1890–99

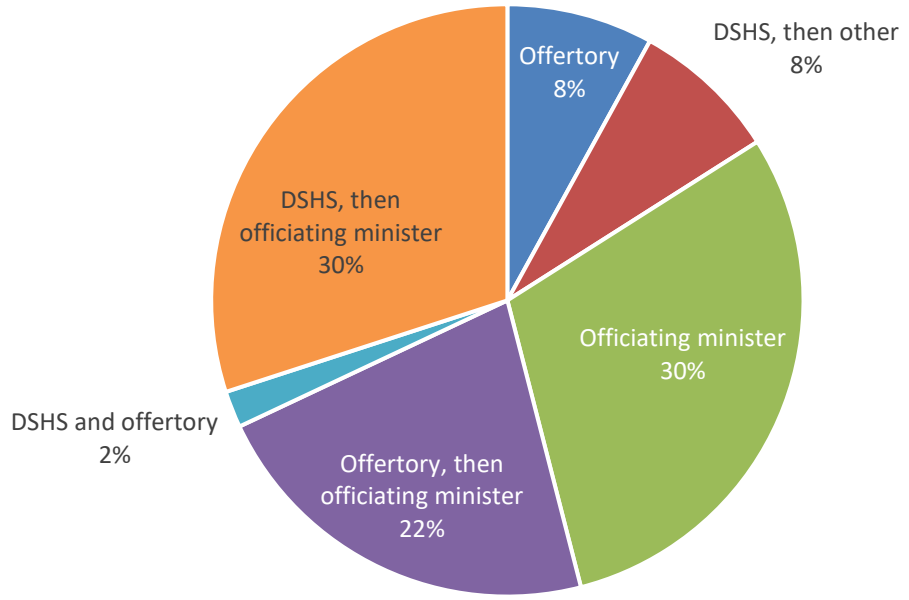
Parish	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
	Average living nett: 1890, 1896, 1899[154]	Average total assisting curates' stipend: 1890, 1896, 1899	DSHS[155] grant (% of stipend from column B)	Living minus cost of curates' stipend
Binsey St Margaret	£63	no data		£63

150 Haig, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 282.
151 'Church Progress', *Quarterly Review,* 124/247 (1868), p. 242; the reason this did not happen in Oxford is that no private patrons owned inner-city parishes.
152 Thomas Espinelle Espin, 'The Inadequate Provision for the Clergy: its Present Effects and Ultimate Consequences', *CC* (1893) [Chancellor of Chester and Liverpool dioceses].
153 VR 1899, Cowley St John.
154 Calculated from the visitation returns for each parish.
155 DSHS: Diocesan Spiritual Help Society.

Parish	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
	Average living nett: 1890, 1896, 1899[154]	Average total assisting curates' stipend: 1890, 1896, 1899	DSHS[155] grant (% of stipend from column B)	Living minus cost of curates' stipend
Cowley St James	£180	no data		
Cowley St John SS Mary and John	£297	£340	£30 (9%)	-£13
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	£125	no data		£125
Headington St Andrew	£168	£127	£35 (27%)	£76
Iffley St Mary the Virgin	£246	no data		£246
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	£209	£340		-£131
Marston St Nicholas	£136	no data		£136
North Oxford St Margaret	£122	£240		-£118
Oxford All Saints	£277	£73		£204
Oxford SS Philip and James	£208[156]	£368		-£160
Oxford St Aldate	£257	£330		-£73
Oxford St Barnabas	£292	£270	£35 (13%)	£57
Oxford St Clement	£265	£210		£55
Oxford St Cross Holywell	£158	£67		£91
Oxford St Ebbe	£269	£5		£264
Oxford St Ebbe Holy Trinity	£223	£150	£35 (23%)	£108
Oxford St Frideswide	£350	£100	£22 (22%)	£272
Oxford St Giles	£177	£127		£50
Oxford St Martin Carfax	£84[157]	no data		£84
Oxford St Mary	£142	£100		£42
Oxford St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	£304	£285		£19
Oxford St Michael	£214	£41		£173
Oxford St Paul	£131	£100	£33 (33%)	£64
Oxford St Peter in the East	£203	£67		£136
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	£307	£145		£162
Oxford St Thomas	£234	£190		£44
Summertown St John the Baptist	£196	£9		£187
Average	£208	£158	£32 (17%)[158]	£80

156 Calculated from visitation returns for 1896 and 1899 only.
157 Calculated from visitation return for 1890 only.
158 This average is calculated from only the six parishes with a grant from the Diocesan Spiritual Help Society.

Graph 3-7 Sources for assisting curates' stipends as a percentage



DSHS: Diocesan Spiritual Help Society

Comparing the assistant curates' stipends alongside the officiating minister can be misleading, because in 82% of cases the minister was paying either all or a sizeable portion of the stipend from their own living (Table 3-6 and Graph 3-7). In 30% of instances the officiating minister bore the entire cost himself. In all, by 1890 six parishes were receiving assistance from the Diocesan Spiritual Help Society, but in all instances the grant covered less than the stipend, and the officiating minister contributed as well, sometimes quite significantly.[159] At St Aldate in 1893, for example, the cost of paying for three curates (one of them officiating minister at St

[159] List of grants taken from 'Grants Paid in 1901', *Diocese of Oxford Reports of the Four Diocesan Societies, the General Fund, and the Church Elementary Schools Association* (1901), p. 62.

Matthew Grandpont) cost £54 more than the entire living, and the rector only managed with financial support from his friends.[160]

Probate records for the clergy in this thesis plots an overall decline of affluence over the second half of the century. Graph 3-8 (p. 159) presents the average wealth as listed in probate for all clergy from each visitation, both actual and as adjusted to the 1899 pound, and Graph 3-9 (p. 158) shows the adjusted values for officiating minister and curates separated for comparison.[161] Clergymen attending visitation in this review from 1860 on were more likely to die poorer. Nearly all the Cowley fathers gave up sometimes considerable wealth to the mission, taking on a 'spirit of poverty' and dying with very

little indeed.[162] For a few, poverty struck quickly and from unexpected quarters, as was the case for John Scott-Tucker (vicar, St Andrew Headington, 1889–99) and George Moore (perpetual curate, St James Cowley, 1875–1928), who filed for bankruptcy in 1899. Both were victims of scandal and fraud from which neither recovered.[163]

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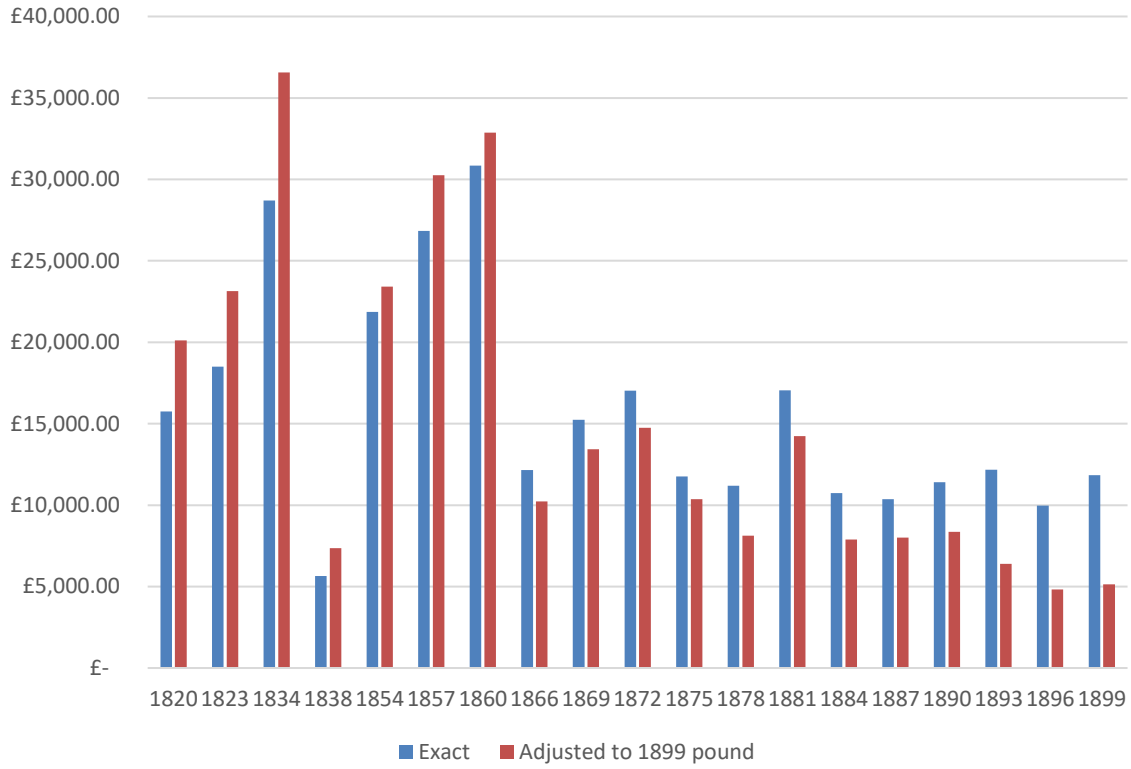
160 VR 1893, St Aldate.

161 Graph 3-8 and Graph 3-7 differ from all others in this study, in that the figures (of wealth at death) are from an event that occurred later, possibly many years after, a visitation. This explains why the exact figure and adjusted figure for 1899 are different. In this light, the adjusted values are particularly important in making comparisons meaningful. There are not enough data to calculate averages meaningfully before the 1820s.

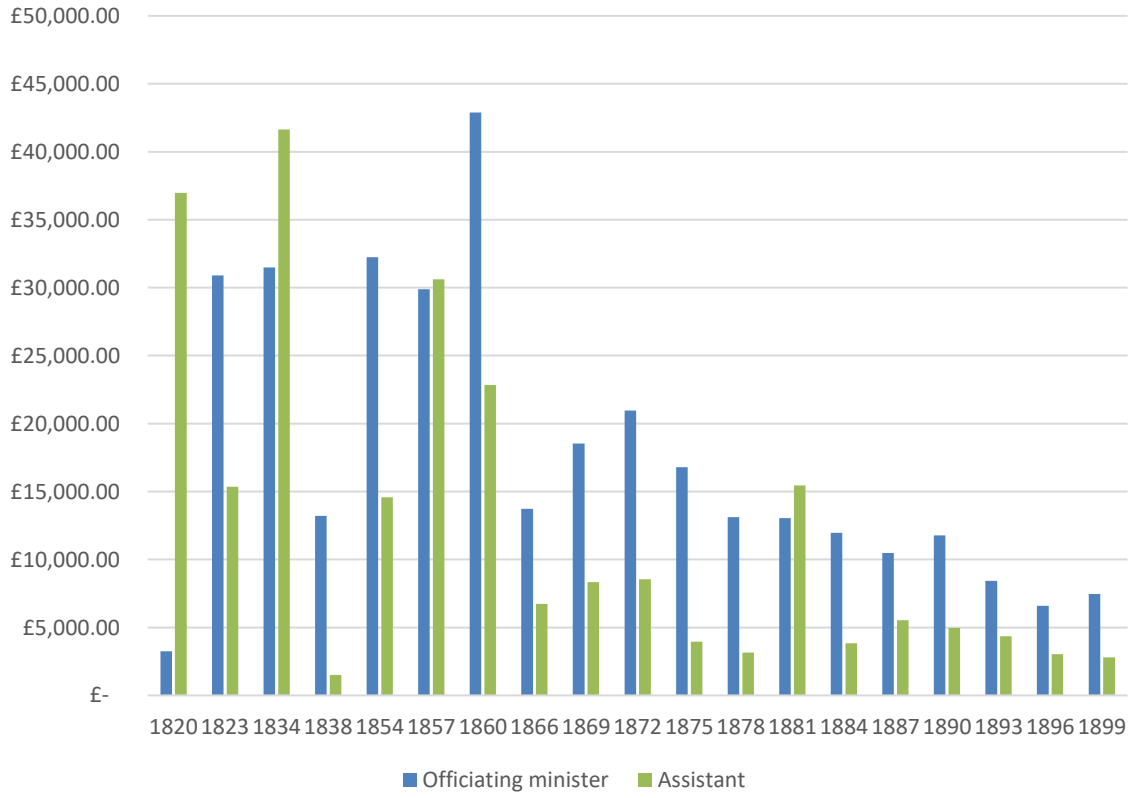
162 Peter Frederick Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: S.P.C.K., 1955), p. 80 and n. 1.

163 Scott-Tucker and Moore agreed to be guarantors of Headington parishioner Mrs Kingscote, who in 1899 fled to Switzerland, leaving each clergymen owing about £20,000 to her creditors while reporting assets of about £300 each; see 'Vicar of Cowley in the Bankruptcy Court', *JOJ* (10 June 1899) and 'Bankruptcy of the Vicars of Cowley and Headington: the Kingscote Loans', *JOJ* (22 July 1899).

Graph 3-8 Average wealth at death by visitation, 1820–99: exact and adjusted to 1899



Graph 3-9 Average wealth at death by visitation, 1820–99: officiating minister and assistant, adjusted to 1899



In general the officiating ministers were relatively well off, but many assistant curates were especially poor, dying with an average 53% less wealth than their ministers. When St Aldate curate James Hewlett died in 1820 his family was living in such poverty that, despite a subscription raising almost £75,[164] his daughter was admitted to premises in St John's Wood managed by the Clergy Orphan Corporation.[165] James Palmer, curate and officiating minister at St Andrew, noted that his stipend of 36 guineas, later reduced by Whorwood to £27/10s, was inadequate to support his wife and two children. [166] Writing in 1864, one of Blunt's reservations about the role of assisting curate was that it seemed to be creating 'a settled separate order from the beneficed clergy' with many never acquiring a beneficed position, such that a 'body of extremely poor clergy' was being formed.[167]

Biographical metrics

A key factor that changed over the century was the length of time a clergyman remained in his parish. A minister who treated a low-paid city parish such as those in Oxford as a stepping-stone to a better placement was less likely to stay than a clergyman committed to the position from a sense of religious calling or duty. Within a week of accepting the perpetual curacy at Binsey in 1818, the ambitious Charles Lloyd was already looking to apply for a more advantageous position.[168] The longer a minister stayed at a church, the greater the opportunity to develop meaningful

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164 'Subscription for the Widow and Family of the Rev. J. Hewlett', *JOJ* (17 June 1820), p. 3.
165 *An Account of the Incorporated Society for Clothing, Maintaining, and Educating Poor Orphans of Clergymen* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1834), p. 29.
166 VRs 1802, 1805, St Andrew Headington.
167 Blunt, *Directorium pastorale*, pp. 405–06; Blunt mirrors eighteenth-century concerns on substitute curates.
168 Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*, p. 73.

relationships with parishioners. There could also be a continuity of service in parochial philanthropic work, regularity of service style and temperament, and a general familiarity in social relationships.

Table 3-7 compares the average length of time in years that clergy in this review held positions before and after 1850. Differences between the figures for assisting clergy are only slight: the temporary nature of their position did not particularly change

Table 3-7 Average length of clerical appointment in years, 1802–38 and 1854–99

Type of clergy and date	University patronage	Non-University patronage
All clergy 1802–38	4.46	8.71
All clergy 1854–99	6.60	7.06
Officiating ministers only: appointments starting before 1850	4.44	9.62
Officiating ministers: appointments starting after 1850	13.30	13.37
Assisting clergy only: appointments starting before 1850	4.53	Insufficient data[169]
Assisting clergy only: appointments starting after 1850	3.99	4.28

over the century and the average length of time in service was slightly less than four years. But length of service between college and non-college-owned churches, and between the first and second half of the century, reveals significant disparity. In the first half of the century officiating ministers stayed not much longer than curates, almost 4.5 years. But even though financial remuneration had not substantially increased in the second half of the century the length of stay almost tripled in duration to over 13 years.

Many individuals with the means and opportunity to leave their parish for something easier and better remunerated chose not to do so. Edmund Hobhouse, minister at St Peter in the East, 1843–58, repeatedly turned down offers of preferment before

169 Too few assisting clergy can be identified to calculate a meaningful average.

moving to overseas missionary work in New Zealand.[170] William Duggan, incumbent of St Paul 1871–1904 with a £50 stipend, lived in the parish as a lodger to save money, and refused offers of incumbencies elsewhere.[171]

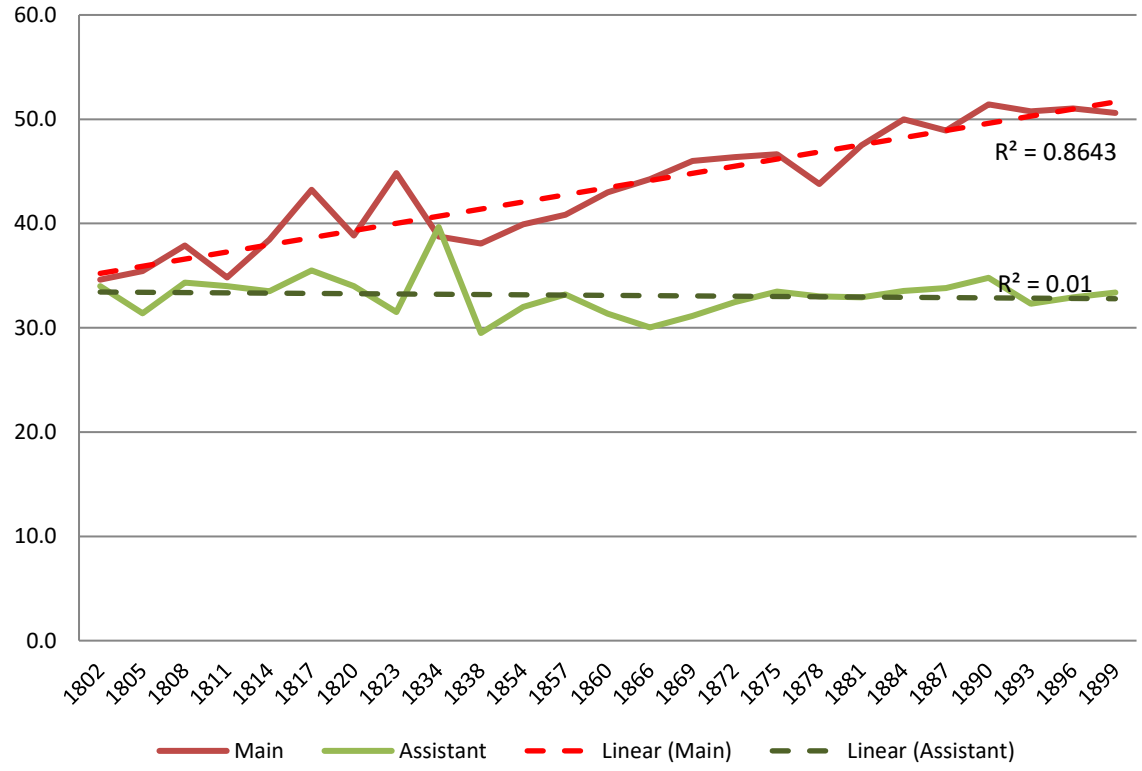
Between 1850 and 1900 incumbencies of four years or less were rare. Except for Headington Quarry, all other parishes had no more than one instance of a minister present for fewer than four years. Instead, the second half of the century is dominated by individuals who remained at their parish for extended periods of time. Anglo-Catholic ministers included Thomas Chamberlain at St Thomas (50 years), Richard Benson in Cowley and Cowley St John (36 years), and Montague Noel at St Barnabas (30 years). St Paul (built in 1833) had only two ministers for the whole century: Alfred Hackman and William Duggan. Holywell, with strong Tractarian leanings, had only three ministers from 1850: Henry Walton, George Freeling, and Howard Leigh. Long-serving evangelicals included Christopher at St Aldate (46 years), Thomas Prout at Binsey (35 years), and Joseph Pring at Headington (41 years). Other lengthy incumbencies included Charles Longland at Headington Quarry (21 years, 1870–91), and John King at St Peter in the East (from 1857 through to the next century).

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170 A.R. Buckland and H.C.G. Matthew, 'Hobhouse, Edmund', in *ODNB* [online edn; accessed 25 January 2020].

171 'Obituary', *JOJ* (27 Feb 1904) [William Bottomley Duggan]; and George Lewis, *An Oxford Parish Priest: Being an Account of the Life and Work of the Rev. W.B. Duggan* (Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1905), p. 136.

Graph 3-10 Average age of officiating minister and stipendiary curate, 1802–99

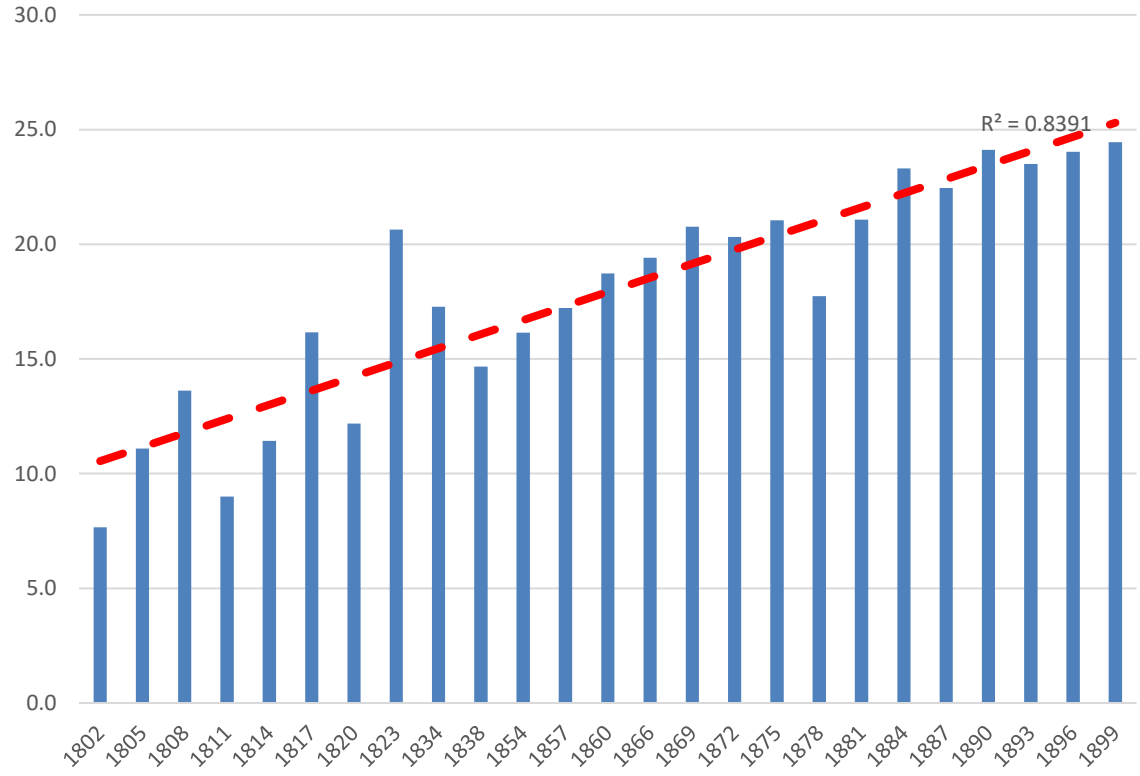


If clergy were staying at their posts for longer, their average age and number of years working in a parish correspondingly increased. Generally speaking, nineteenth-century clergymen lived relatively long lives. In a study calculating the mortality rate of 71 representative occupations in England and Wales, clergymen had the highest life expectancy of all trades and professions: 46.3 years in 1860–71, and 49 years in 1900–02.[172] In this study the average ages of the officiating ministers gradually rose

[172] The next two highest occupations were farmer and gardener; these calculations are taken from age 20; see Robert Woods, *The Demography of Victorian England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 224; for caveates on these figures see pp. 214–23; it is beyond the scope of this study to take into account the variables that help estimate life expectancy, beyond the observation that from the age of 20 life expectancy in England and Wales rose throughout the century, and that in Oxford figures seemed to have risen in tandem; see *ibid.,* chap. 5–7; Simon Szreter and Graham Mooney, 'Urbanization, Mortality, and the Standard of Living Debate: New Estimates of the Expectation of Life at Birth in Nineteenth-Century British Cities', *The Economic History Review,* 51/1 (1998); and Parfit, *The Health of a City: Oxford, 1770–1974,* chap. 2–3.

over the century (Graph 3-10), from the mid-30s in the first decade to the low 50s by the final decade. At the start of the century the average age of officiating minister and assistant curate was very close, at 34 and 34.6 years.[173] But unlike with officiating ministers, the average age for assistant curates remained younger and mostly fluctuated between 30 and 35 years.[174] If the 1802 data is compared with figures from 1899, ministers from the end of the century were running their parishes with 15 years more experience (Graph 3-11).

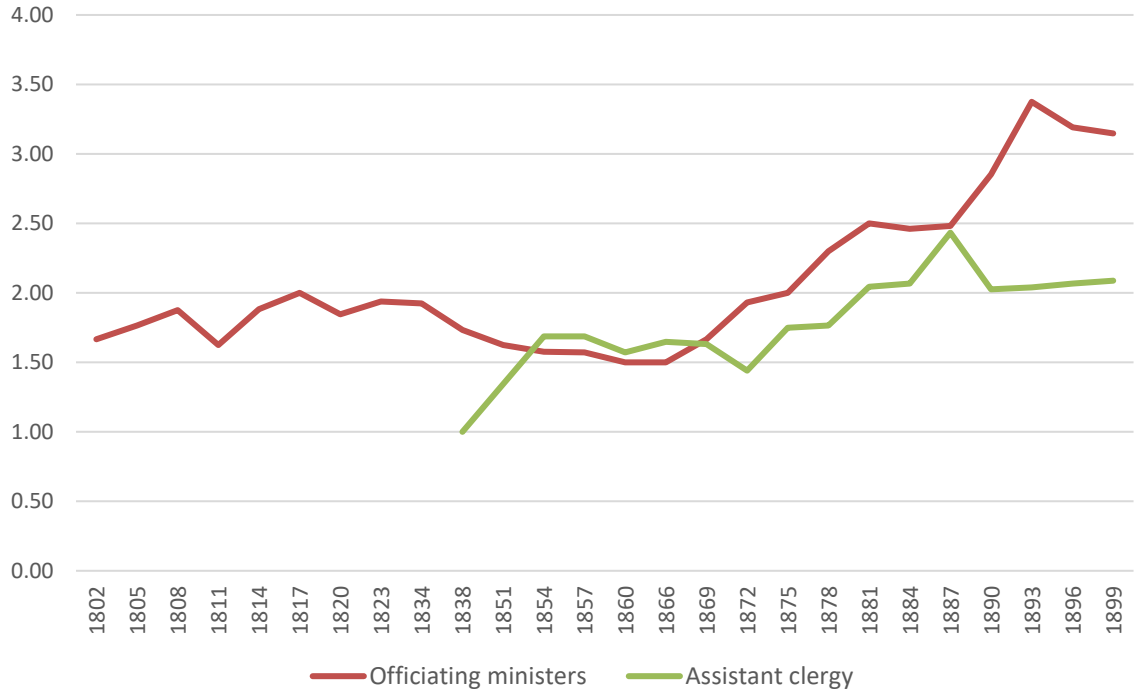
Graph 3-11 Experience: average number of years from ordination to visitation, 1802–99



173 Averages calculated from the small number of assisting curates up to the 1820s are to be treated cautiously.

174 That curates were younger than ministers is a common trend; see for example Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. vii.

Graph 3-12 Number of prior clerical positions, 1802–99



The extra years of experience did not solely accrue during their time at an Oxford parish; clergy were also more experienced before they took up their position. On average, over the century ministers worked in a greater number of parishes prior to accepting their Oxford post (Graph 3-12). In the first half of the century most ministers were taking on an incumbency either for the first or second time. Towards the end of the century, however, ministers with considerably more previous experience running a parish were taking on ministerial duties. By 1914 this had become a county-wide phenomenon, with 28% of clergy having to serve curacies for 16 years or longer before becoming an incumbent.[175]

[175] Smith, *Parish in Wartime*, pp. 36–37.

Graph 3-13 Years elapsed between graduation and becoming deacon, 1802–99



Between graduating from Oxford and becoming a deacon, the average time for clergy in this study was less than two years four months, and 64% became deacons within two years of graduation.[176] Two exceptions were Thomas Warburton and EdwardHathaway: both worked as lawyers for 16 and 25 years respectively before seeking ordination. Excluding these two cases (their inclusion significantly affects the wider trend), Graph 3-13 plots the length of time between graduation and becoming a deacon, and shows a slight but discernible trend: over the century the clergy were being ordained sooner after graduating. The pattern of taking a University degree with either one year of theological training at a college or, in Oxford at least, a year of honours with the theology faculty, was well established by

[176] The average of 2.3 years was calculated using calendar years only and not months, the same applies to the data in Graph 3-13.

the 1890s,[177] with some clergy arguing that training in holy orders should be mandatory.[178]

Taken together, the data from the previous four graphs and Table 3-7 (p. 161) help build a picture of the pastoral teams working at each parish over the century. There was no single position on what was a best arrangement between a minister and his curates in respect to age and experience. Part of Bishop Magee's strategy to transform church life in Northampton, for example, was to appoint 'vigorous young men as incumbents', especially in the urban parishes.[179] At Oxford the pattern was that an older and more experienced officiating minister was assisted by younger, and potentially more energetic, curates. This approach was followed very consciously by the evangelical Simeon Trust, whose preference was to appoint older ministers who were more likely to stay longer in the parish.[180] The same pattern has been observed elsewhere. In Royle's study of an 1858 visitation in Ripon, north Yorkshire, he notes that 'the incumbents represented stability in the diocese; the curates represented mobility'.[181] In Ripon, of the 283 incumbents whose year of birth is known, 38% were 50 or older at the visitation. In Oxford, as an average of all the visitations, 56% of the incumbents were 50 or over. Of the 135 assistant curates in Ripon whose year of

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177 John Wordsworth, 'Preparation for Deacons' and Priests' Orders I', *CC* (1892), p. 441 [Bishop of Salisbury].

178 E.C.S. Gibson, 'Preparation for Deacons' and Priests' Orders: Address', *CC* (1892), p. 462 [Princpal, Wells Theological College]; Gibson's address was strongly endorsed by Oxford University's Regius Professor of Divinity, William Ince, see pp. 469–70.

179 Hatley, *Church in Northampton*, p. xx.

180 Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 88.

181 Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. x.

birth is known, over four-fifths were in their twenties or thirties.[182] In Oxford, as an average over the century, 82% of curates were in their 20s and 30s.

Motivations

Three connected personal motivations are suggested and evaluated to explain the data so far examined. Firstly, that the clerical position was held while waiting for a more prestigious or better remunerated appointment; secondly, that clergy were attracted to remain a part of the University or college life; and thirdly, that of a sense of religious calling.

Parish as holding post

Some men clearly treated their position as minister for an Oxford parish as a holding post, staying only until a better remunerated or higher status position became available. If the advowson was college-owned, then the minister would invariably be from that same college, and the living could supply extra income to enhance a perhaps meagre fellowship, the value of which could fluctuate wildly from one year to the next.[183] College advowsons were not allocated by merit, but rather according to a hierarchy of seniority determined by the length of time an individual had been a fellow.[184]

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182 *ibid.*, p. xii.

183 Dunbabin, 'Finance and Property', p. 379.

184 This practice was followed even when the recipient for preferment was clearly unsuitable for the position: see for example Edward Free (incumbent of St Giles 1802–8), in R.B. Outhwaite, *Scandal in the Church: Dr Edward Drax Free, 1764–1843* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), p. 11 and passim.

In the eyes of an appointee, the very low pay justified providing no more than a morning and evening service on Sunday, with one sermon a week and perhaps a mid-week afternoon prayer service: a provision that in any case was, for many clergy at the start of the nineteenth century, considered adequate.[185] For Edward Copleston, minister at St Mary Oxford 1800–10, city churches were 'small in point of revenue, and bringing with it little of parochial responsibility, yet desirable as an introduction to clerical duty'.[186]

Although the value of the livings was low, the location within the city of Oxford nevertheless gave these posts a degree of prestige, and the city parishes of Oxford developed a reputation as an interim position for individuals with ambitions to episcopacy.[187] 18 bishops and two archbishops of Canterbury worked at these fashionable but poorly-paid churches before advancing through the Church's ranks.[188] At least 71 ministers cultivated careers sufficiently prominent for inclusion

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185 On Oxfordshire see McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*; for a wider analysis see F.C. Mather, 'Georgian Churchmanship Reconsidered: Some Variations in Anglican Public Worship, 1714–1830', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 36/2 (1985), esp. p. 267; see also Alfred Blomfield, *A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield, DD, Bishop of London: with Selections from his Correspondence* (London: John Murray, 1863), p. 57; number of services and sermons are considered in chapter five.

186 William James Copleston, *Memoir of Edward Copleston ... with Selections from his Diary and Correspondence* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1851), pp. 9–10.

187 Gibson, 'Professionalization of an Elite', pp. 471–72.

188 All Oxford appointments are as officiating minister unless noted otherwise. William Awdry, curate of St Peter in the East (1866–68), bishop of Southampton (1895–96) and Osaka, south Tokyo (1896–1910); Thomas Birley, St Thomas the Martyr (1896–1908), bishop of Zanzibar, Tanzania (1925–43); William Carey, St James Cowley (1800–03), bishop of Exeter (1820–30) and St Asaph (1830–46); Francis Chavasse, St Peter-le-Bailey (1877–89), bishop of Liverpool (1900–23); Edward Copleston, St Mary the Virgin (1800–1810), bishop of Llandaff (1827–49); Edmund Elwin, curate of St Peter-le-Bailey (1894–96), bishop of Sierra Leone (1902–09); Walter Hamilton, St Peter in the East (1837–41), bishop of Salisbury (1854–69); Edmund Hobhouse, St Peter in the East

in the *ODNB*; at least 39 ministers engaged in overseas mission for part of their lives; and 71 pursued subsequent careers in secondary education.[189]

University life

For some clergy the particular attraction to Oxford-based churches was the potential to maintain a direct relationship with the University. Their academic research and teaching could continue alongside what might be relatively light spiritual duties, and they remained active participants within a tightly-knit homosocial community of colleagues and students. For overworked clergy from across England, a month at Oxford was a possible therapeutic destination to recuperate from the rigors of parish work, a place to 'give themselves to study and devotion and peace'.[190] For some, the opportunity for the University to be a long-term home was hugely attractive. Anglican clergy in ministry were not permitted to work in most professions but working for the University (or in education) was an exception to the rule. At least 113 clergy in this review held University posts of some description, apart from being

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(1843–58) bishop of Nelson, New Zealand (1858–65); Edwin Kempson, curate of St Peter-le-Bailey (1886–87), suffragan bishop Warrington (1920–27); Edmund Knox, St John the Baptist Oxford (1874–79), suffragan bishop of Coventry and then bishop of Manchester (1903–21); Cosmo Lang, St Mary the Virgin (1893–96), bishop of Stepney, archbishop of York, and then archbishop of Canterbury (1928–42); Sydney Linton, Holy Trinity St Ebbe (1870–77), bishop of Riverina, Australia (1884–95); Charles Lloyd, Binsey (1818–20), bishop of Oxford (1827–30); Charles Longley, curate at Cowley (1823–27), bishop of Ripon, Durham, archbishop of York and then archbishop of Canterbury (1862–68); Alfred Pearson, St Ebbe (1877–80), suffragan bishop of Burnley (1905–09); Thomas Short, St James Cowley (1816–23), bishop of Sodor and Man, and then St Asaph (1846–70); Addington Venables, St Paul (1853–63), bishop of Nassau, West Indies (1863–76); William West Jones, Summertown (1864–74), bishop and then archbishop Cape Town, South Africa (1874–1909); also John Henry Newman, curate at St Clement and then incumbent St Mary Oxford (1828–43) became cardinal in the Roman Catholic church (1879–90).

189 Calculated from my own data.

190 John Gott, *The Parish Priest of the Town: Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School, Cambridge* (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1906), p. 285.

a fellow. Examples include John Cramer, who during his time at Binsey (1822–45) was also principal of New Inn Hall (1831) and regius professor of modern history (1842);[191] and John Gutch at St Clement (1795–1831), who was chaplain and librarian of All Souls, chaplain of Corpus Christi from the 1770s, and University registrar from 1797.

Pluralism, together with non-residency, were reported in Oxford in 1831 as 'two relics of Popery which it is the right time to abolish in a Reformed Church'[192] and both issues were main causes of hostility towards the clergy.[193] But even though nearly all ministers in this study were technically resident[194] and only working in one parish, in many instances few parishioners would have benefited from the close proximity owing to the social separation between University and town life.

The low pay of many of the livings made taking on University work and living behind college walls a practical necessity, and almost the default in the first half of the century. John Wills, warden of Wadham College, held the living of St Andrew Headington 1776–1804 but appointed curates there for the entirety of his incumbency.[195] Alfred Hackman, incumbent of St Paul 1844–71, worked as Bodleian

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191 Mark C. Curthoys, 'Cramer, John Antony', in *ODNB*, online edn [accessed 20 March 2018].

192 'Reform in Church', *OUH* (16 April 1831), p. 1; see also Littoralis, 'On the Charges Made Against the Church', *British Magazine,* 2/8 (1832), pp. 150–51, parts of which were reprinted, with much approval in 'Literature', *OUH* (13 October 1832), p. 4.

193 'Projects of the Season II: the Church', *The Spectator,* 4/134 (1831), p. 85.

194 Although it should be noted that there was an unusually high number of examples of non-residency in parishes a little further out from Oxford than the parishes in this study, but close enough that a minister could live in Oxford and travel out to the church for one day of the week only; see McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, p. 33.

195 His curate in 1802, Palmer from Oriel, was at the time a candidate for ordination and was required to reside in the parish, with a stipend of 36 guineas; Palmer remained curate when the incumbency was passed to Whorwood in 1804, although his payment was reduced to £27/10s, a small amount for supporting his wife and two children (VRs 1802, 1805, St Andrew Headington).

Librarian almost to the exclusion of his pastoral duties, which he left largely to curates. The net living of St Mary the Virgin Oxford never rose above £37 over the century, and out of necessity its holders required an additional source of income. Newman, for example, was earning approximately ten times more from tutoring than from his appointment at St Mary.[196] In 1878 the pay of St Mary Oxford was so low that Oriel had no fellows from its own college willing to take up the position, finally appointing Edmund Ffoulkes, a fellow of Jesus college who had returned to the Anglican church after seceding to Rome 1855–70.[197] The appointment was not without controversy, and Ffoulkes's attempt to have St Martin's minister Cox disciplined by the University following a sermon Cox preached as a select preacher at St Mary Oxford was seen by some as 'the most odious — the most contrary to current, not to say universal, notions of justice'.[198]

Because nearly every clerical appointment in Oxford was taken up by a fellow, residency was available within college walls and up to 1830 there was no demand for parsonages. The University provided a space for the affluent and intellectual elite, an exclusive lifestyle quite removed from local parishioners. A fellow's social life largely revolved around the college common room[199] rather than the usual social networks of urban ministerial life, and parishioners often had a minister who was practically unapproachable and distanced from parochial concerns. Certainly the homosocial society that the senior common room cultivated was greatly appreciated — and

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196 Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: the Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven, Conn., London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 122.
197 'Obit.', *The Times* (21 April 1894), p. 12 [Edmund Salusbury Ffoulkes].
198 'A "Religious Difficulty" at Oxford', *Manchester Guardian* (4 January 1887), p. 3.
199 Curthoys, 'The "Unreformed" Colleges', p. 167.

missed — by some members. In the words of Vicesimus Knox the tutors' common room was a 'delightful retreat, where never female shewed her head since the days of the founder!'[200]

As well as living behind college walls, it was a requirement for nearly all fellows of the University to be single. As shown in Table 3-8, in 1831/32 only two parishes owned by a college had a married clergyman; the vast majority were

Table 3-8 Patron, marital status, glebe house, and other duties: 1831/32

Parish	Patron	Marital status	Glebe house	Other duties 1831
Binsey St Margaret	Univ.	Married	No	Private tutor and historian
Cowley St James	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, Christ Church
Headington St Andrew	Other	Married	No	Landowner
Marston St Nicholas			Unfit	
Iffley St Mary the Virgin	Univ.	Married	No	Vicar of neighbouring parish Sandford
Oxford All Saints	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, chaplain of Merton
Oxford Holywell St Cross	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, Merton
Oxford St Aldate	Univ.	Single	Unfit	Fellow, became freeman 1830
Oxford St Clement	Other	Married	No	Many University positions
Oxford St Ebbe	Other	Single	Mixed	Fellow, Glebe house rented out
Oxford St Giles	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, St John
Oxford St John the Baptist	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, chaplain Lincoln
Oxford St Martin Carfax	Other	Single	No	City person
Oxford St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	Other	Married	No	Archdeacon of Oxford
Oxford St Mary the Virgin	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, Oriel
Oxford St Michael	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, chaplain of Merton
Oxford St Peter in the East	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, Merton
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	Other	Single	No	Academic and Under-Librarian
Oxford St Thomas	Univ.	Single	No	Fellow, Christ Church
Married: 26.3%			Glebe house: 0%	

[200] Lilian M. Quiller-Couch, (ed.), *Reminiscences of Oxford by Oxford Men, 1559–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 159.

unmarried. Those who were married held their clerical position under exceptional circumstances: Whorwood, who was also patron and squarson of Headington; and Edward Marshall, curate at Iffley and married with five children, retained close connections with the parish of Sandford St Martin, where he had been curate since 1801 and vicar from 1835, sharing the patronage with the Duke of Marlborough.[201] Furthermore, the requirement for celibacy deprived many parishes of the potential contributions of a minister's wife and daughters, roles that were greatly developed and appreciated over the course of the century.[202] Exactly how a benefice disrupted collegiate relationships depended on how seriously an individual took his parochial responsibilities. When Newman accepted the curacy at St Clement in 1828 he was concerned at the need to develop social skills to relate with the lower orders, something that residency in the world of collegiate academia hindered, potentially permanently.[203] Newman wrote to his father in 1824 that he was 'convinced it is necessary to get used to parochial duty early, and that a Fellow of a College after ten years residence in Oxford feels very awkward among poor and ignorant people'.[204] After first visiting the 'most respectable third' of the parish, Newman wrote to his mother 'I rather dread the two thirds of the parish which are to come', indicating that

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201 Edward Marshall, *An Account of the Parish of Sandford* (Oxford and London: James Parker, 1866), pp. 43–45. Marshall married the daughter of a previous Iffley minister in 1814, following which he invested money in Iffley's parish and rectory before becoming its curate in 1819. With a return of £37 a year the benefice was very poorly paid, but for Marshall it would have been a convenient arrangement that brought in extra funds.

202 Midori Yamaguchi, *Daughters of the Anglican Clergy: Religion, Gender and Identity in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), passim, esp. chaps. 3–4.

203 John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. I.T. Ker and Thomas Gornall, vol. 1: *Ealing, Trinity, Oriel, February 1801 to December 1826* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 181.

204 John Henry Newman, *Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Henry Tristram (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), pp. 198–99.

he anticipated trouble might arise from those quarters.[205] In one day, Newman could visit about eight households, as long as they were close together.[206] When Newman became vicar at St Mary Oxford he established an intercollegiate group of celibate males specifically to forge relationships he felt would have been absent if he did not cultivate a substitute.[207]

Religious calling

Over the century the practice of colleges reserving their city advowsons exclusively for their members slowly eroded, a trend identified in data limited to parishes owned by a University college (Graph 3-14, p. 176; colleges are listed in Table 3-3, p. 139).[208] There was a clear, gradual shift in how colleges selected clergy for positions in these churches. Exempting the few unidentified clergy, it is evident that in 1802 all were from the same college that owned the advowson, but by 1899 over 70% were not. It seems that over the century other criteria were increasingly used to determine who was offered a position. Preferential treatment to college members was less common, and factors other than personal advancement were being taken into consideration.

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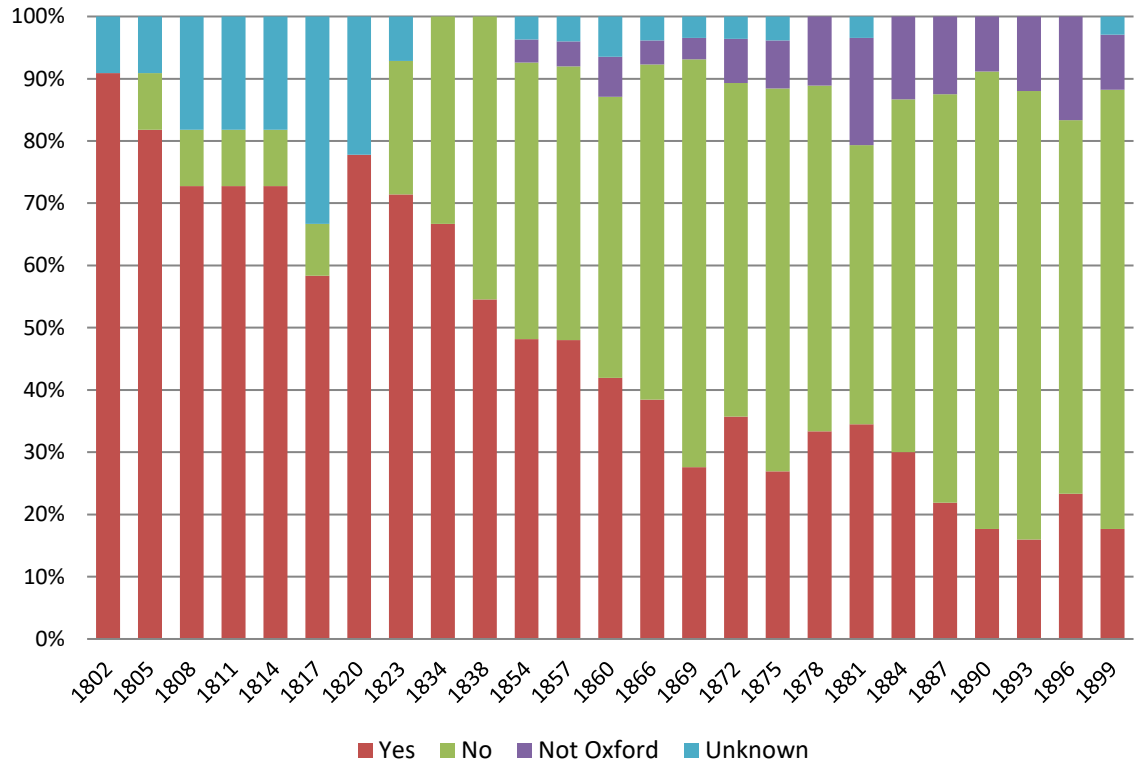
205 Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 181; this eventuated but perhaps not as he anticipated, with Newman describing the death of one impoverished young girl from a family he became acquainted with as 'very painful — it is like a sword going thro' my heart' (*Letters and Diaries*, vol. 1, p. 233).

206 John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Ian T. Ker and Thomas Gornall, vol. 4: *The Oxford Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), letter to R.F. Wilson, 3 July 1834, p. 289.

207 Turner, *Newman*, p. 126.

208 These data need to be read with some care, as following on from their undergraduate studies some alumni developed relationships with other colleges. Stuart Angel Smith from Magdalen College, for example, was chaplain at New College 1875–77, Magdalen College 1877–87, and finally Christ Church 1876–87. Arthur Johnson matriculated from Exeter college but a year later moved to All Souls' College; after one year as chaplain he was lecturer in modern history at nine different colleges until his death in 1827. It is instructive to note it was only his association and brief chaplaincy with All Souls' that was deemed worth noting on his gravestone in Holywell cemetery; image available at billiongraves.com/grave/Arthur-Henry-Johnson/3235000 [accessed 14 Jan 2020].

Graph 3-14 Percentage of clergy from the same college that owns the advowson, 1802–99



In a paper on church reform and pay, reference was made to 'clergymen who in a most admirable and marvellous way toil on year after year with no hope of other reward than to see the fruits of their labours here, and to be recompensed in the resurrection of the just'.[209] It is part of the thesis of this study that clergy were drawn to, and remained in, these low-paid incumbencies from a sense of religious duty or calling. In many instances a sense of spiritual or moral guidance was considered a primary factor that influenced choices and behaviour. Though the general style of nineteenth-century religious biography and obituaries was to emphasise this aspect, perhaps to an exaggerated degree, there is also ample corroborating evidence that this was genuinely so for many. Such evidence includes the length of time clergy

[209] Sydney Gedge, 'Patronage, Tenure, and Exchange of Benefices', *CC* (1893), p. 205.

remained in their posts, the diligence with which it seemed they performed their duties, and their often relative poverty at time of death.

Many ministers displayed significant self-sacrifice and effort in their parochial work and no longer regarded their duty as providing merely one or two Sunday services. The curates working under Benson at the Iron church, for example, did not consider themselves parochial clergy, but rather missionary priests.[210] One of Benson's curates, Oliver Prescott (Cowley St John and Iron Church, 1869–76) wrote to his sister in February 1870 concerning his workload:

> I have only three leisure days between this and Easter, that is, only four days on which I am not engaged to preach and with but two exceptions from three to five times every day. The ten days before Ash Wednesday I am advertised to preach and make addresses just 50 times and the 30 days following 90 times and this exclusive of three missions and my Lent work at All Saints.[211]

Sustaining such a demanding workload could take its toll. Another of the Cowley fathers, George Congreve, curate for Benson 1874–93, sometimes found his work to be a 'yoke' that he dreaded. He described his frequent melancholy as a 'villain' that 'starts up again and again, and I often don't know what to do … The depression depresses me'.[212] Regular pastoral work alongside a parish's poorest classes was recognized at the time as rendering ministers 'oppressed in spirit and absorbed in painful thought'.[213] George Butler, curate at St Giles 1854–57 and principal of one of Oxford's few private halls, reported suffering from exhaustion and depression.[214]

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210 James, *Cowley Fathers*, p. 54.

211 Jervis S. Zimmerman, *An Embattled Priest: the Life of Father Oliver Sherman Prescott, 1824–1903* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2012), p. 45.

212 Mildred Violet Woodgate, *Father Congreve of Cowley* (London: SPCK, 1956), pp. 39, 48; on depression see also pp. 19, 23.

213 William C. Preston, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: an Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (London: James Clarke, 1883), pp. 18–19.

214 H.C.G. Matthew, 'Butler, George', in *ODNB* [online edn; accessed 2 January 2019].

Edmund Tyndale, incumbent at St Andrew Headington 1879 until his death in 1889 at the age of 37, was reported to have 'literally worked himself to death' in his dedication to his pastoral work.[215] When in 1856 Christopher had to choose whether to remain with his wife and mortally ill four-year-old daughter in Southampton, or leave to attend two planned mission meetings on St Helier in the Channel Islands, he chose to honour his commitment to preach.[216]

Further evidence of committed clergy is found in the recognition of their services by others. In 1896 Griffith Thomas (curate, St Aldate, 1889–96) appears to have been the only curate honoured with an invitation to be one of the speakers at the Islington Clerical Conference.[217] One of Hackman's assistants, the very wealthy Addington Robert Peel Venables, was one of only a few ever to be elevated directly from a curacy to a bishopric, a recognition, at least in part, of the responsibilities he had taken on at Hackman's parish St Paul.[218]

The three motives considered above were not necessarily exclusive, and in most instances it seems all of them influenced the nature and execution of ministry. Moreover, an individual could be academically successful while maintaining a sense of religious calling; a commitment to academic life did not necessarily involve

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215 'In memoriam: Edmund F.G. Tyndale', *OT* (28 December 1889).

216 Caroline was Christopher's only daughter, and she died shortly after he left; the incident has been recorded as 'one of the most difficult decisions of his life', see Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 69.

217 Andrew Atherstone, 'Thomas, (William Henry) Griffith', in *ODNB*, online edn [online edn; accessed 20 March 2019].

218 For the considerable contributions Venables made during his curacy see W. Francis Henry King, *Addington Venables, Bishop of Nassau: a Sketch of his Life and Labours for the Church of God* (London: W. Wells Gardner, 1877), pp. 3, 14; having prime ministers Henry Addington and Robert Peel as godfathers almost certainly played a role in his rapid promotion.

appreciation of the University community; and having a strong sense of calling did not necessarily exclude living in college and maintaining strong connections there. For example, Walter Hamilton (incumbent at St Peter in the East 1837–41), rose through the ranks to become bishop of Salisbury in 1854, but considered his time at St Peter in the East 'the happiest in his life'. His biographer H.P. Liddon noted that while at St Peter in the East 'he was the most indefatigable of parish priests; and as a preacher and a visitor of the poor, he soon won all hearts that could be reached at all'.[219] The cantankerous and tiresome nature of Frederick Metcalf (perpetual curate, St Michael, 1849–85) isolated him as much from his University colleagues as from his parishioners, but despite his unpopularity and apparent disinterest in clerical life he remained a respected and well-published scholar.[220] Thomas Chamberlain specifically requested the impoverished and poorly paid parish of St Thomas and remained minister there 1842–92, but at the end of every day he retired to his rooms and primary circle of friends at Christ Church.[221]

The parsonage and respectability

A need for an incumbent to have a suitable residence in the parish was becoming more widely recognized within the Church by the 1830s, for several reasons. Firstly, it made it harder for clergy to justify owning multiple benefices. A minister could not easily live in two residences at once, and it was becoming generally accepted not only

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219 Henry Parry Liddon, *Walter Kerr Hamilton, Bishop of Salisbury: a Sketch*, 2nd edn (London: Rivingtons, 1869), pp. 9–10.

220 Elizabeth Baigent, 'Metcalf, Frederick', in *ODNB* [online edn; accessed 18 March 2019].

221 Chamberlain bought a cottage in the parish to be the vicarage, but never lived in it, and instead rented it to one of his curates; Algernon Barrington Simeon, *A Short Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Chamberlain* (London: J. Masters, 1892), pp. 15–16.

that a minister ought to be able to reach the people, but that 'clergymen should be accessible to their people at every possible time; they should know where to find us'.[222]

Secondly, a free residence of a suitable standard added value to the living and the status of the minster, and this reflected well on the Church in general. This was particularly the case for poorer parishes with few resident gentry, where a suitable parsonage helped ensure at least one family was living in the community who could dispense charity and model suitable behaviour to their poorer neighbours. The parsonage was also material testament to the presence of the national Church and the parochial system it represented. For Bishop Jackson the parsonage was the 'key-stone of our Church's system'.[223]

It was with these principles in mind that a parliamentary review in 1835 counted parishes that included a glebe house fit for use in England and Wales 1829–31.[224] Its summary data established that 63% of the parishes in Oxfordshire had a parsonage, higher than the national average of 53% but well below a desired level of 100%.[225] The Oxford parishes under review, however, differed from the county average in that only St Ebbe had a suitable glebe house, which in any case had been inhabited by a baker since 1838,[226] and by the 1850s was considered inadequate.[227] Iffley (spelt

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222 W.D. Maclagan, 'The Means of Bringing the Influence of the Church to Bear upon the Masses of the People: Address', *CC* (1873), p. 348 [Vicar of Newington].

223 1855 Charge, cited in James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825–1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 164.

224 *Report of the Commissioners Appointed by His Majesty to Inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales*, 1835, table 4.

225 *Ibid*., summary tables, p. 48.

226 VR 1838, St Ebbe.

227 'Parish of St Ebbe's', *OUH* (4 December 1852), p. 1.

Yefley in the 1835 *Ecclesiastical Revenues* table) did benefit from a functioning rectory but the property was not listed as a glebe house because the rector, Edward Marshall, had purchased the house privately in 1803.[228] Visitation returns from 1838 include details of other parsonages overlooked by the parliamentary enquiry: a parsonage in St Aldate was being used as a residence for a college servant, and another in Marston was used by labourers as two separate cottages.[229] And although there was no official glebe house in Cowley connected to the benefice, the dean and chapter of Christ Church provided a cottage near the church for a curate, who reserved a room within it for the minister to use on his weekly Sunday visits.[230]

In Oxford between 1830 and 1890 the residential situation of the Clergy changed entirely (Table 3-9, p. 182). In 1830 no minister lived in a glebe house and just over 25% were married; nearly all clergymen undertook additional duties in their college. By 1890, however, only two ministers lived in college, over 64% lived in a glebe house, and over two thirds were married. Furthermore, these ministers did not have competing work elsewhere: their parish appointment was their primary concern.

The provision and quality of a parsonage could have a direct impact on how long a clergyman might remain in a parish, and building a residence in a parish that did not have one could entice the minister to stay, as happened in St Ebbe. Its modest living was hardly an attractive benefice, and in 1852 its popular officiating minister, George Cameron (curate, St Ebbe, 1847–60), expressed an intent to move to the adjoining

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228 Marshall, *Iffley*, p. 71; Marshall lived in the Iffley Rectory from 1818.
229 VRs 1838, St Aldate and Marston.
230 VR 1838, Cowley.

Table 3-9 Patron, glebe house, marital status and notes: 1890/91

Parish	Patron	Glebe house	Marital status	Address, with notes
Binsey St Margaret	Univ.	Not yet	Single	Christ Church; glebe house by 1899
Cowley St James	Univ.	Yes	Married	The Vicarage
Cowley St John SS Mary and John	Other	Not yet	Married	Glebe house by 1901
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	Univ.	Yes	Married	The Vicarage (1868); with children
Headington St Andrew	Other	Yes	Married	Headington Vicarage; with children
Iffley St Mary	Other	Yes	Married	Iffley Rectory; used as rectory from 1818, but owned privately by rector until 1856[231]; with children
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	Univ./ Other	Yes	Single	Littlemore Vicarage
Marston St Nicholas	Other	Yes	Married	Marston Vicarage; with children
North Oxford St Margaret	Univ.	No	Married	97 Banbury Road
Oxford All Saints	Univ.	No	Married	9 Keble Road; with children
Oxford SS Philip and James	Univ.	Yes	Single	Vicarage of SS Philip and James; with two sisters
Oxford St Aldate	Other	Yes	Married	St Aldate's Rectory (1878)
Oxford St Barnabas	Univ.	Yes	Single	St Barnabas Vicarage (1869)
Oxford St Clement	Other	Yes	Married	St Clement's Rectory; with children
Oxford St Cross Holywell	Univ.	Mixed	Single	Merton College; Holywell Vicarage (1864) used by current curate[232]
Oxford St Ebbe	Other	Yes	Married	St Ebbe's Rectory (1852); with children
Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity	Other	Yes	Married	Trinity Vicarage; with children
Oxford St Giles	Univ.	No	Single	7 Museum Street, St Giles
Oxford St Martin Carfax	Other	No	Married	111 Woodstock Road
Oxford St Mary	Univ.	No	Married	40 St Giles Street; with children
Oxford St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	Univ.	No	Single	62 George Street
Oxford St Michael	Univ.	No	Married	6 Warnborough Road; with children
Oxford St Paul	Other	No	Single	162 Great Clarendon Street, lived as lodger with parishioner
Oxford St Peter in the East	Univ.	(Yes)	Married	Not in parish: South Parks Road, Holywell parish

231 In 1856 the property was gifted to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of England, thus restoring the house to its earlier function as the residence of the incumbent of the parish; see Marshall, *Iffley*, pp. 71–72.

232 The curate was Thomas H. Tydd, with wife, two daughters, and one domestic servant: 1891 Census return: RG12; Piece: 1167; Folio: 109; p: 15.

Parish	Patron	Glebe house	Marital status	Address, with notes
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	Other	Mixed	Married	Park Villas: The Cedars (probably Park Town); not used by Rice, who lived at 48 High Street from 1894–99; with children
Oxford St Thomas	Univ.	Not yet	Single	Glebe house from 1891
Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	Univ.	Yes	Married	The Vicarage (1872)
Summertown St John the Baptist	Univ.	Yes	Married	Summertown Vicarage; with children
Glebe house: 64.3%			**Married: 67.8%**	

church of St Martin Carfax. A new rectory for St Ebbe was designed by G.E. Street and built in 1852 on Paradise Square in seventeenth-century style, with mullioned windows, high gables, and a stair turret that gave it an attractive gothic air.[233] As a direct consequence, and much to the appreciation of his parishioners, Cameron remained at St Ebbe another eight years. The *Oxford University Herald* observed that the addition of a new parsonage discouraged 'a too frequent change of Clergyman', and helped 'the moral and spiritual well-being of a poor and large population' such as at St Ebbe.[234] By 1890 nearly all the ministers in this review were living in a glebe house. Visitation returns from 1890 include the insurance premium for their residence, and it is clear from their responses that most of the ministers lived in substantial homes (Table 3-9 and Table 3-10, p. 184). In two parishes the glebe houses were valued higher than the church building: Littlemore's parsonage was valued £500 higher than SS Mary and Nicholas, and the vicarage at Headington Quarry was £50 higher. Only two houses were valued below £1,000: Binsey, which

233 'St Martin's Rectorship', *OC* (28 February 1852), p. 3; the rectory was significantly extended in 1869 to include more space for running pastoral activities, see 'St Ebbe's Rectory House', *OC* (16 October 1869), p. 8.

234 'Parish of St Ebbe's', *OUH* (4 December 1852), p. 1.

was not being used by its incumbent Thomas Prout, who remained at Christ Church; and St Barnabas, where the vicarage, with its 'very unassuming edifice', [235] fulfilled a primary goal for the three clergy who lived there to be a monastic-inspired presence in the parish, living simply and without unnecessary comfort.

Based on a sample from the census returns in the middle of the century, a study by Davidoff and Hall has established that 47% of lower middle-class households had one domestic servant living with them, while 49% of upper middle-class families had either two or three servants.[236] Only 23% of upper-class families had four or more

Table 3-10 Value of parsonage in 1890

Parish	Value 1890[237]
Binsey St Margaret	£400
Cowley St James	£1,000[238]
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	£1,000
Headington St Andrew	£1,000
Oxford St Cross Holywell	£1,200
Iffley St Mary	£1,900
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	£2,500
Oxford SS Philip and James	£2,000
Oxford St Aldate	£3,500
Oxford St Barnabas	£600
Oxford St Clement	£2,000
Oxford St Ebbe	£2,700
Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity	£1,560
Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	£1,500
Oxford St Peter in the East	£1,500
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	£3,500
Oxford St Thomas	£2,000[239]
Summertown St John the Baptist	£1,500
Average value	£1,742

235 Bassett, *S. Barnabas', Oxford: a Record of Fifty Years*, pp. 32–33.
236 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 468.
237 Taken from 1890 visitation returns unless specified; churches not listed did not provide an answer to this question for any of the returns in the 1890s.
238 VR 1887, Cowley St James.
239 VR 1893, St Thomas.

servants, but more than half of all clergy families had this full complement, higher than three times the national average. [240]

By the end of the century the home was central to social status: a suitably furnished residence with a non-working wife and three servants was on the threshold of upper middle class.[241] In Oxford the provision of a parsonage was a necessity to enable the minister to live at an address that would otherwise be beyond the means of the living. Apart from St Paul and St Barnabas, in 1891 all the clergy in this study had either two or three servants (Table 3-11, p. 186). Although fewer servants than most clergy households, nationally it matched other upper middle-class families, and even the expense of servants could be allayed by the not uncommon practice of clergy families hiring girls at a lower rate and training them to be employable as domestics elsewhere.[242] This positions them comfortably as upper middle-class families, and depending on the number of non-resident staff, they were either as well staffed as clergy families nationally or slightly less so.

The mobility of clergy also impacted their earning potential. Ministers who soon moved onto better paid placements would be more likely to be wealthier at the end of their lives than ministers who remained for many years in one of Oxford's poorly paid parishes. Graph 3-11(p. 164) and Graph 3-12 (p. 165) reflect changes in

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240 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 388.

241 M.J. Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: an Economic and Social History of Britain, 1851–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 340.

242 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 388.

Table 3-11 Clergy 1890/91: domestic details

Parish	1890/91 address	Marital status	Domestic help[243]
Binsey St Margaret	Christ Church	Single	College servants/scouts
Cowley St James	Vicarage	Married	House maid, cook, butler (M)
Cowley St John SS Mary and John		Married	Cook, housemaid
Headington St Andrew	Vicarage	Married+children	Cook, nurse x2
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	Vicarage	Married+children	Cook, housemaid
Iffley St Mary	Rectory	Married+children	Cook, housemaid
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	Vicarage	Single	Cook, house and parlour maid
Marston St Nicholas	Vicarage	Married+children	Nurse, housemaid x2, cook
North Oxford St Margaret	97 Banbury Road	Married	Cook, housekeeper, housemaid (1901 census)
Oxford All Saints	9 Keble Road	Married+children	Cook, parlour maid, nurse maid
Oxford SS Philip and James	Vicarage	Single	Cook and housemaid
Oxford St Aldate	Rectory	Married	Cook and housemaid
Oxford St Barnabas	Vicarage	Single	Page (M)
Oxford St Clement	Rectory	Married+children	Cook; parlourmaid, nurse
Oxford St Cross Holywell	Vicarage used by current curate	Single	College servants/scouts
Oxford St Ebbe	Rectory	Married+children	Nurse, cook, housemaid
Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity	Vicarage	Married+children	Cook, housemaid
Oxford St Giles	7 Museum Street, St Giles	Single	Housekeeper, manservant (M)
Oxford St Martin Carfax	111 Woodstock Road	Married	Cook, housemaids x2
Oxford St Mary	40 St Giles Street	Married+children	Cook, housemaid, parlour maid
Oxford St Mary Magdalen (and St George)	62 George Street	Single	Housekeeper, general servant
Oxford St Michael	6 Warnborough Road	Married+children	Nursemaid and general servant
Oxford St Paul	Lodger at 162 Great Clarendon Street	Single	General servant
Oxford St Peter in the East	South Parks Road, Holywell parish	Married	[not found]
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	Park Villas: The Cedars (probably Park Town)	Married+children	Nurse, housemaid, cook

[243] All domestic staff were female unless labelled (M).

Parish	1890/91 address	Marital status	Domestic help[243]
Oxford St Thomas	Not in 1890, but Yes From 1891	Single	College servants/scouts
Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	The Vicarage	Married	Cook[244]
Summertown St John the Baptist	Vicarage	Married+children	Parlourmaid, cook
			Average 2.4 servants

attitude and priority of Oxford clergy over the century, with poorer paid livings taken by individuals who stayed longer. For some Clergy the concern was less a matter of personal comfort or well-being — despite the final quarter of the century being identified as an economic depression the standard of living rose[245] — but rather how the profession was socially perceived. As Scott Robertson explained, clerical income was thought to determine 'to a considerable extent, the sort of men' who were attracted to become clergy, and lower incomes might result in 'inferior men' being recruited into the Church.[246]

Since most of these clergymen were Oxford and Cambridge graduates, Robertson might have awarded them gentlemanly status despite their poverty, although perhaps with some reservation over the 34 who matriculated at Oxford as non-collegiate students. Among the group of non-collegiate scholars there was indeed a concentration of poor clergy, several of whom were considered to be from exotic backgrounds. For example, Charles William Pearson, curate at St Ebbe 1886–1900, was the son of a butcher who was first educated at the less expensive St Bees

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244 Not found in census; live in cook mentioned in 'Fatal Kitchen Boiler Explosion At St Frideswide's Vicarage', *JOJ* (22 January 1881), p. 7.

245 This was especially so within the working class; see Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare*, p. 378.

246 Scott Robertson, 'Church Finance, Clerical Incomes, Church Expenses: Papers', *CC* (1877), pp. 419–20 [vicar, Great Yarmouth].

theological school. He became a non-collegiate student at Oxford after having worked as a missionary in Uganda, and, despite establishing himself as an eminent translator familiar in 17 languages, died almost penniless in 1917.[247]

Although wealth was a major delineator of class, 'respectability' was not purely an economic distinction: occupation, presentation, style, accent, and vocabulary were only part of what contributed to the perception of a nineteenth-century person's social status.[248] In Oxford the Clergy livings mostly remained very low, but that did not hinder the incumbents or officiating ministers in this review from managing to live as upper middle class, although for some it would have demanded careful budgeting.

Mid-century: reform, secularization, broad church, and revival

The 1850s were a defining time of change for the University and reforms that had gained momentum from the 1830s were in full force. The religious history of the University from the 1830s to the 1850s has received much deserved attention, but the impact these issues had on local churches in Oxford has been barely considered. This is an oversight, since the function of the city's churches critically influenced the religious character of the University in the second half of the century. It is within the context of University reform, and the wider cultural and religious ideas that shaped it, that parochial life in Oxford over the century can be better understood. Two other

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247 Stephen Hayes, 'Pearson, Charles William', in *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* [online resource: https://dacb.org/stories/uganda/pearson-charlesw/; accessed 14 January 2019]; and probate record.

248 K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846–1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 64.

mid-century factors — one national (the 1851 Religious Census); the other diocesan (the elevation of Wilberforce to the see of Oxford in 1845) — were also influential, and will be briefly considered first.

On the national scale, the results of the 1851 religious and education censuses provoked contentiously pessimistic analyses of the country's religious practices. Concerning the 'labouring myriads', Horace Mann's 1854 report noted that 'it is sadly certain that this vast, intelligent, and growingly important section of our countrymen is thoroughly estranged from our religious institutions.'[249] While Wilberforce and others questioned the accuracy and interpretation of the data, the census galvanized the Church's supporters and their critics into action.[250]

Following Samuel Wilberforce's arrival as Bishop of Oxford in 1845 there were several reforms within his diocese. When Lloyd had been Bishop of Oxford in 1827 it was the second poorest-paid bishopric in England and only affordable when combined with his professorial stipend.[251] The expansion of the diocese to include the archdeaconries of Berkshire in 1837 and Buckinghamshire in 1845 rendered Oxford a far better remunerated and influential diocese.[252] Wilberforce was a leading national figure of the time with high ambitions: he maintained intimate connections with clergy in his diocese and worked energetically to expand the work of the

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249 Mann, *1851 Religious Census*, p. 93.

250 In the religious census see especially K.D.M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and for Oxfordshire see Tiller, *Church and Chapel*. Census returns for the parishes in this review are examined in chapter four, p. 299.

251 Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*, p. 149.

252 The transference of the county of Buckingham from Lincoln to Oxford formally took place in 1837, but by agreement with Bishop Bagot this did not come into effect until his resignation from the see in 1845.

Church.[253] His vision of the clergy's role began to be realized from the 1850s on, making the middle of the century pivotal in any examination of Oxford's parishes. Burns has argued that reform at the diocesan level predated these reforms by a few decades, but in Oxford it was the appointment of Wilberforce that resulted in the greatest diocesan changes.[254]

From the beginning of the century the University had been almost uniformly Tory, mostly high church, and in principle anti-Erastian.[255] From 1828–32 political reform dominated the national religious profile; recent efforts to describe these crucial years as a 'constitutional adjustment' rather than a 'constitutional revolution'[256] do not capture the local political ethos at Oxford, where an Anglican hegemony was embedded within much of its institutional identity.[257] The repeal of the Test and Corporations Act in 1828 and the passage through both houses of the 1829 Roman Catholic Emancipation Act raised profound questions within the University concerning the status of the Church and its right to be treated as a truly national institution. The 1832 Reform Act intensified this concern. At a national level it strengthened the political influence of dissenters and encouraged them to push for

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253 Arthur Burns, 'Wilberforce, Samuel', in *ODNB* [online edn, Jan 2009; accessed 20 May 2013]; Burns notes that from the 1960s on Wilberforce has received more scholarly attention than any other nineteenth-century bishop.

254 Burns, *Diocesan Revival*.

255 Michael George Brock, 'The Oxford of Peel and Gladstone, 1800–1833', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

256 Nicholas Dixon, 'The Church of England and the Legislative Reforms of 1828–32: Revolution or Adjustment?', *Studies in Church History,* 56 (2020); Nockles describes the period as a revolution; see for example, Peter Benedict Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760–1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 44.

257 Mark Chapman, 'Newman and the Anglican Idea of a University', *Zeitschrift fr Neuere Theologiegeschichte (Journal for the History of Modern Theology),* 18/2 (2011), p. 212.

greater religious liberties.[258] This coalesced in Scotland as the Voluntary movement, and spread to England around 1833, with the British Voluntary Society established in London the following year to coordinate a wider campaign for the disestablishment of the Church.[259]

From the 1790s both the University and Oxford city had resisted emancipation and disestablishment, deeming them a threat to civic peace and religious liberty.[260] The University's only pro-emancipation Chancellor, Lord Grenville, appointed in 1809, was unable to garner sufficient support from the University to promote this cause.[261] Before 1829 many University members were aghast at the possibility of Roman Catholics influencing Church matters by becoming members of parliament, and some of this concern spilled into Tractarianism.[262] Newman's nomination of Keble's 1833 Assize sermon as the genesis of the Oxford Movement overlooks an earlier and possibly more accurate starting point: 27 February 1829.[263] This was the day Robert

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258 Richard Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion, and Reform, 1830–1841* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 23.

259 Brown, *Providence and Empire*, pp. 83–88.

260 See for example 'City of Oxford: Test and Corporation Acts', *JOJ* (6 Feb 1790), p. 3, recording a unanimous vote by the City council against a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

261 On the complex political machinations necessary to get Grenville elected despite his pro-emancipation views; see William Gibson, 'The Election of Lord Grenville as Chancellor of Oxford University in 1809', *Oxoniensia,* 61 (1996), pp. 355–67.

262 Nockles, 'Oxford Movement and the University', pp. 201–02

263 Other starting dates have been identified as more useful; Inman for example suggests the death of the Regius Professor of Divinity Edward Burton in 1836, precipitating the Hampdon crisis; see Daniel D. Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford, 1833–1945* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), p. 51.

Peel lost his Oxford seat to the evangelical Robert Inglis following Peel's intention to support the Roman Catholic emancipation bill.[264]

Even University individuals open in principle to emancipation voted against Peel:[265] in the words of Roman Catholic Joseph White 'the fury of the no-Popery party knew no bounds'.[266] But the election was more than an anti-Catholic movement: it had been transformed into a confrontation between the University and Westminster. For Newman, the vote against Peel was 'a great thing', writing, without irony, that the University had acted as a 'religious, straightforward, unpolitical body' and had resisted being 'blown round by the breath' of liberal forces in London.[267] But despite the defeat dealing a blow from which the liberal Noetics at Oriel never entirely recovered,[268] from 1830 on liberal reform slowly began to gain greater traction in Oxford as individuals proposing such changes were able to foster influential support in Westminster.

Under a nearly unbroken run of Whig government 1830–41 a group of liberal Anglicans with connections to John Russell and younger Whigs gained new political influence. A series of Acts was passed through parliament as part of an effort to reform the Church and address objections being raised by the Voluntary Society.

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264 N. Gash, 'Peel and the Oxford University Election of 1829', *Oxoniensia,* 4 (1939); Baker, *Beyond Port and Prejudice*, pp. 176–90; Brock, 'Oxford of Peel and Gladstone'; and Nockles, *Oxford Movement*, p. 67.

265 Brock, 'Oxford of Peel and Gladstone', pp. 56–58.

266 Quiller-Couch, *Reminiscences*, p. 209.

267 John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. I.T. Ker and Thomas Gornall, vol. 2: *Tutor of Oriel, January 1827 to December 1831* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 122 [letter to sister Harriet, 17 Feb 1829].

268 Richard Brent, 'Note: the Oriel Noetics', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

Reports created by the Ecclesiastical Commission, a body of clergy and laymen formed in 1835 and made a permanent commission in 1836, led to a series of reforms: the Established Church Act of 1836, the Plurality Act of 1838, and the Dean and Chapter Act of 1840. Together, these acts helped reallocate money to fund rapidly growing urban parishes, establish new places of worship, and increase the number of Clergy. [269]

But it was ultimately the less-studied broad churchmen who made the greatest impact on the University's religious constitution in the second half of the century. While the University was struggling to manage controversies arising from the activity and publications of the Tractarians, a debating club at Balliol called 'The Decade' brought together a group of liberal broad churchmen. Often overshadowed by the Oxford Movement, these important thinkers included the Arnold brothers, Benjamin Brodie, William Lake, Frederick Temple, Benjamin Jowett, and A.P. Stanley.

When it became clear the University lacked sufficient interest to reform itself, a royal commission was set up in 1850 to investigate. Most Oxford fellows refused to cooperate, and the team appointed to examine Oxford reflected the minority group interests of broad church University liberals and reformers, rather than the Hebdomadal Board and Convocation. [270] With the Hebdomadal Board only recommending very limited proposals to Convocation, Parliament finally took the initiative and in 1854 the Oxford University Act was passed into law. Alongside making substantial changes to how the University was run, there was no longer a

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269 For a detailed account of this see Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*.
270 Brockliss, *University of Oxford*, p. 350.

requirement for an undergraduate to undergo a theological test or take the Oath of Supremacy in order to matriculate. This act, and then the Universities Tests Act of 1871 which enabled non-Anglicans to take up teaching positions, set the University on a different trajectory from the religious agenda of its more conservative members.[271] It was a process that in Oxford and elsewhere ignited strong Church party feelings, although this dissipated somewhat over the second half of the century.

For Matthew Arnold, a key member of The Decade, the years 1843–53 'divided past and present'.[272] The perception of the middle of the century as a pivotal time around which the University changed was remarked upon by many contemporaries. Mark Pattison noted in his memoirs that 'if any Oxford man had gone to sleep in 1846 and had woke up again in 1850 he would have found himself in a totally new world. In 1846 we were in Old Tory Oxford … In 1850 all this was suddenly changed as if by the wand of a magician.'[273] In 1898 senior tutor at Trinity College and later University vice-chancellor Herbert Blakiston wrote with hindsight that 'the total alteration effected by the Royal Commission of 1854, and still more by that of 1871, though not yet fully realised, is so great that the first half of the century is almost ancient history'.[274]

The resistance to reform among the majority of University members leading to the 1854 University Act rested in part on a fundamental understanding of their duty to

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271 A.J. Engel, *From Clergyman to Don: the Rise of the Academic Profession in Nineteenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983).

272 Tod E. Jones, *The Broad Church: a Biography of a Movement* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), p. 227 [on the Decade see chap. 4].

273 Mark Pattison, *Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1885), p. 244.

274 Herbert E.D. Blakiston, *Trinity College* (London: F.E. Robinson, 1898), p. 213.

students. They recognized that the University student was at a formative stage of life, going through an initiation from boyhood into the duties and privileges of elite British manhood.[275] At the heart of the enterprise lay the task of raising manly gentlemen,[276] and by the middle of the century most University members still considered religion the necessary foundation upon which other knowledge, and especially ethics, rested. The ideology underpinning much of the 1854 Act was one asserting that knowledge and truth as applied within most disciplines could be taught from outside a religious epistemology, especially one that was exclusively Anglican. This was especially significant if the University was to remain a centre for raising the country's next generation of Anglican ministers. But to the consternation of the University's more conservative members, the number of candidates for ordination was in decline (Table 3-12).[277]

Table 3-12 Percentage of graduates ordained as Anglican clergy.[278]

1818/19	1848/49	1878/79	1897/98
49.7%	49.3%	29.2%	18.1%

[275] Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850–1920* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), esp. chap. 2.

[276] 'Manliness' in this context was used primarily as an antonym to 'boyishness' rather than 'femininity'; see Heather Ellis, 'Newman and Arnold: Classics, Christianity and Manliness in Tractarian Oxford ', in Christopher Stray, (ed.), *Oxford Classics: Teaching and Learning, 1800–2000* (London: Duckworth, 2007), p. 47.

[277] See for example D.P. Chase, *The De-Christianising of the Colleges of Oxford* (London: Rivingtons, 1869) and A Fellow of a College, *Spiritual Destitution at Oxford: a Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Oxford* (Oxford: George Shrimpton, 1876).

[278] Curthoys, 'The Careers of Oxford Men', p. 503; the methodology for calculating these figures is superior here to the different numbers calculated in Haig, *Victorian Clergy*, p. 30; on a significant error in calculations in Engel, *Clergyman to Don*, p. 286, see Alan Haig, 'The Church, the Universities, and Learning in Later Victorian England', *Historical Journal,* 29/1 (1986), p. 187, n. 3.

When the University's theology school was founded in 1870 its format and content were effectively as Pusey had advocated,[279] but this victory was not enough to stop the rising secularization that was taking hold. The 1854 Act was not — and by its inherent reforming nature could not be — an isolated event. Rather it paved the way for a wider secularization of University culture, including the cultivation of the professional Oxford don,[280] the widening of studies to include new disciplines,[281] and the elimination of compulsory chapel.[282] Up to the 1880s the University's most conservative members, led by Pusey, continued to fight for influence with some success. Their efforts were hampered by an inability to use the reforming structures of the University to their advantage, and they never managed to bring together the majority of the University, who would have mostly identified as orthodox high church.[283] It is instructive to note that the reception of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860, was, at Oxford and elsewhere, overwhelmingly negative, with Wilberforce leading Clergy pushing for the book to be condemned by the upper house of Convocation.[284] In contrast, the publication in 1889 of *Lux Mundi*, a collection of essays by Oxford

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279 Inman, *Making of Modern English Theology*, p. 127.

280 See especially Engel, *Clergyman to Don*; and H.S. Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

281 N.A. Rupke, 'Oxford's Scientific Awakening and the Role of Geology', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

282 Hinchliff, 'Religious Issues', p. 108.

283 Inman, *Making of Modern English Theology*, p. 145.

284 Josef L. Altholz, *Anatomy of a Controversy: the Debate over 'Essays and Reviews', 1860–1864* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), pp. 60, 63.

theologians that triggered similar protests within the Clergy, at Oxford represented what was accepted as theological orthodoxy.[285]

It is within this context that the figures in Graph 3-3 (p. 127) can be understood, and it rests on an apparent paradox. Two facts, that the University became more secular over the course of the nineteenth century, and that the 1854 Act was an important milestone in that process, are indubitably correct. And yet at the same time the visitation returns, corroborated by other local records, evince from the middle of the century a highly active parochial church culture that experienced what has hitherto been mostly overlooked, but can be labelled — albeit tentatively — a revival of sorts. Though certain evidence points to gradual change over the century, the middle of the century remains an important turning point from which local churches pursued a more engaged and energetic relationship with not just University members but all the city's classes.

Making sense of this paradox requires unravelling the different social constructs within which secularization can occur. In this thesis the word 'secularization' refers to instances of an observable decline of religious belief and its social significance, and does not draw upon a narrower — and increasingly unfashionable — definition that implies a causal link between any such decline and a pre-existing increase in society's industrialization or sense of progressive modernity. Peter Berger has noted that the secularization theory has been misinterpreted such that 'a whole body of literature

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285 Inman, *Making of Modern English Theology*, pp. 194–95; contributor Francis Paget (bishop of Oxford, 1901–11) and contributor and editor Charles Gore (bishop of Oxford, 1911–19) were Stubbs's two successors as Oxford bishops, and contributor Aubrey Moore was Stubbs's chaplain.

by historians and social scientists loosely labelled "secularization theory" is essentially mistaken.'[286] In terms of evaluating evidence of secularization, Field helpfully breaks possible sources into four categories: 1) the individual and their internal belief system and self-identity; 2) religious institutions, such as the Church and its degree of success and influence; 3) the state, and how it legislates and monitors religious bodies and their activity; and 4) society's culture, including social investigation by non-religious bodies, and a more discursive examination of literature and other cultural manifestations.[287]

Exploring the ramifications of the 1854 University Act from all four aspects helps to understand better its conflicting outcomes. As an institution, the University was being moved, albeit slowly and with reluctance, towards a more professionalised educational model, such as some examples in Germany, where the process had begun about 70 years earlier.[288] But among the most vocal and influential people leading this change at Oxford were many individuals with strong commitments to personal religious belief. Within broad churchmanship University reforms in the 1850s supported the cultivation of a learned and capable parish clergy; their aim was for students to build a consecrated character through disciplined education and a finely

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286 Peter L. Berger, 'The Desecularization of the World: a Global Overview', in Peter L. Berger, (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), pp. 2–3.

287 Clive D. Field, *Periodizing Secularization: Religious Allegiance and Attendance in Britain, 1880–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 12–23.

288 On university reform in Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. chap. 3; for a local study on Berlin see Mark D. Chapman, *Theology and Society in Three Cities: Berlin, Oxford, and Chicago, 1800–1914* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014), chaps. 2 and 3.

tuned intellect.[289] It is worth noting that the 1852 report on the University presumed, erroneously as it transpired, that the 'bulk' of students were destined to be clergymen in a parish church.[290] The broad church push for liberalism and University reform was not necessarily a secularising enterprise, but rather a realignment in which the parochial system of the Church of England modelled to the University student how an ideal parish church could, and should, operate. This approach was soon taken up by Oxford's Tractarian clergy, with the Warden at Keble College noting that religious education at the University required treating their students as 'children of pious and well-instructed Churchpeople, — some such opportunity as they would have as the parishioners and regular members of a congregation'.[291]

By 1865 the number of students attending Sunday evening services at a parish church, and so juggling this alongside commitments to hear college sermons and University sermons, was enough to propose a University-wide rearrangement of Sunday services to better accommodate them.[292] A year later, Burgon, incumbent at St Mary Oxford, wrote that the University's undergraduates 'make their Oxford Sunday "like a Sunday elsewhere"' by attending *parochial* Services', noting that for

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289 Kelsey Sterling, 'The Education of the Anglican Clergy, 1830–1914', doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1982, pp. 56, 137, 175.

290 Oxford University Commission 1852, (22) no. 1482, *Report ... into the State, Discipline, Studies, and Revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford, together with the Evidence*, p. 18.

291 'Keble College Chapel', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (1 May 1873), pp. 2–3.

292 C.W. Sandford, *The University Sermon and College Services: a Letter Addressed to the Vice-Chancellor* (Oxford: John Henry and James Parker, 1865), p. 7.

Sunday 28 January a survey he undertook at Oriel College counted over a third of the students attending parish services, some of them more than once.[293]

By the 1880s ministers in Oxford were realizing their strong potential to impact University students. Instances arose where the number of students attending was regretted by residents in the parish. At the Anglo-Catholic SS Philip and James there were complaints of undergraduates occupying the seats but not contributing to the offering.[294] At a church congress in 1883 the strongly evangelical Christopher at St Aldate noted that Oxford's students:

> are not going up to a home of religious training and influence, as aforetime was the case when a college was true to its idea; but rather that they are going out into a little world; and that their religion must be, in a certain sense, aggressive — that is, they must be prepared to bear their part in maintaining the cause of faith and goodness in the open field.[295]

At the same congress the University Regius professor of divinity William Ince noted that at the University church St Mary Oxford 'one Sunday night after another during the term the church was filled by large bodies of undergraduates, although the service was not a special University institution.'[296]

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293 Burgon, *Oxford Sunday*, p. 13; Burgon considered the count of a third of Oriel's undergraduates attending a parish service to be unusually low because the popular Pusey was preaching a University sermon that morning at St Mary Oxford, and so drew students away for that Sunday.

294 'SS Phillip and James Church', *OT* (7 Oct 1882), p. 7

295 A.M.W. Christopher, 'The Church and the Universities: Discussion', *CC* (1883), p. 334; these remarks echo observations he made in 1875 that 'there never were more young men desiring to serve Christ at our universities than there are now', see Christopher, 'Supply of Clergy', p. 422.

296 Wiliam Ince, 'The Church and the Universities: Discussion', *CC* (1883), p. 329 [Canon of Christ Church, Oxford].

Writing with the benefit of hindsight in 1887, historian Stedman observed that following the University Act, there was a 'spontaneous' move of the centre of gravity of religious teaching away from the college chapel to the local parish churches. This led not to a decline in religious belief and activity among the University body, but to an increase. As he noted:

> the Anglican Church is no longer in sole possession of the [University] ground. She has position, prestige, emolument, but not monopoly. Yet it may be reasonably doubted whether, at any time during the last three hundred years, the Church of England has had adherents among the undergraduates more numerous, more devoted, and more instructed than now.[297]

It was Canon King's (Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology, Oxford) contention that, when compared with thirty years ago, 'the storm of unbelief ' was receding, and that 'there are now men in the University who are drawing more closely and more really [sic] to the several great parts of the truth, and the outcome of it is, that we shall have higher, truer, stronger, and braver lives than we have yet had.'[298] The next speaker stated that 'whatever may have been the precise operation of the University Tests Act of 1871, I do not hesitate to say that it has not been unfavourable to the Church.'[299] Writing on Oxford in 1879, Jackson has noted that

> time has shown that the misgivings expressed by the opponents of change have proved exaggerated. It would be generally admitted that there is more of a religious life in the colleges than there was thirty of forty years ago.[300]

An assertion that the institutional and intellectual secularization that Oxford underwent in the later decades of the century destroyed the University's Anglican

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297 Gent, 'The Religious Life', p. 144.

298 D.D. King, 'The Church and the Universities: Addresses', *CC* (1883), pp. 322, 24 [Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology, Oxford].

299 J.E.C. Welldon, 'The Church and the Universities: Addresses', *CC* (1883), p. 326 [Master of Dulwich College].

300 William Walrond Jackson, *Ingram Bywater: the Memoir of an Oxford Scholar, 1840–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917), p. 84.

constitution without leaving a clear alternative[301] is incorrect: in fact the local parish churches became its response. What was observed instead was a significant rise in pastoral work taking place within the city that was being done 'better than ever', but this was not being organized through the authorities of college and university.[302] By 1888 it was commented that at Oxford

> much-required unity will not be possible on a doctrinal basis … We must be united with one another on a charitable basis … fifty years ago the intellect of Oxford was concentrated on theology: nowadays Oxford is actively interesting itself in the poor and uneducated.[303]

Many parish churches invited popular preachers into their pulpits to draw in undergraduates, and by the 1890s 'young men flocked from all the Colleges' to hang upon the words of men with a reputation for charismatic preaching and magnetic personality.[304] Following the 1854 Oxford University Act the vision of the University as a primarily religious institution continued to be vital to a large portion of its members, particularly the Tractarians and many high churchmen, but apart from forming a college of their own — an expensive feat accomplished with Keble College in 1868 — they had little choice but to follow the most direct strategy available to them, namely establishing new, or supporting pre-existing, local churches that could represent their ideals.

As discussed above, the party that most aggressively adopted this strategy was the evangelicals, with their acquisition of some of Oxford's advowsons, but Oxford clergy

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301 See for example Craig Jenks, 'T.H. Green: the Oxford Philosophy of Duty and the English Middle Class', *British Journal of Sociology,* 28/4 (1977), pp. 481–82.
302 William Reginald Ward, *Victorian Oxford* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1965), p. 315.
303 'Notes in St Mary's', *Oxford Magazine* (13 June 1888), p. 432.
304 Le B.E. Ffrench, 'Reminiscences of Oxford in the Early "Nineties"', *The Churchman,* 45 (1931), p. 128.

who had been influenced by Tractarianism as undergraduates were also demonstrating that, in a climate of change, their religious ethos was resilient and able to adapt.[305] By modelling their understanding of Anglican churchmanship to University students within the city's parish churches, their influence would ultimately be disseminated through these students once they had graduated and were attending Church elsewhere, either as Clergy or laity.

The idea that secularization helps explain church revival might appear counterintuitive. But other factors associated with evidence of secularization within the University were also seen at the time by some as an effort to positively advance religious ideals. The push to eliminate compulsory chapel was primarily, and perhaps paradoxically, being promoted by people arguing on religious grounds. An anonymous pamphleteer in 1833 wrote that 'there are no rules in the University which tend more to encourage disrespect for religion, dislike for all religious exercises, and (what may almost seem a paradox) a total ignorance of the beauties of our excellent liturgy' than the requirement of chapel attendance.[306] Following University reform in 1854, dissenting students were allowed to substitute compulsory chapel with a required roll call, and over the second half of the century this alternative was, at most colleges, extended to all students.[307] Even Keble, noted as one of the 'holy' colleges, did not require attendance at morning chapel, although

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305 On this issue see Chapman, *Theology and Society in Three Cities*, chap. 4, esp. p. 57.
306 A Graduate, *Thoughts on Reform at Oxford* (Oxford: J. Vincent, 1833), p. 6.
307 Brockliss, *University of Oxford*, p. 451.

outside the summer term its main gates were locked until morning chapel had finished.[308]

It is sometimes assumed by modern historians that not forcing or pressuring people to attend religious services leads to an inevitable decline in the presence and intensity of religious belief and activity, but in Oxford this assumption is not supported by the evidence. Removing the requirement of chapel may well have generated a greater devotional attitude to the services that strengthened religious feeling rather than weakening it. That was, at least, clearly the expectation of many churchmen pressing for reform, and seems to have been borne out.[309] At Balliol attendance at Chapel remained high through to the 1890s, in part explained by Jowett attending twice daily unless ill or participating elsewhere.[310] By the 1890s only students preparing for holy orders were required to attend some college chapel services, but having a congregation that was compelled to be there rendered the services 'slovenly and perfunctory … the undergraduate who really is in earnest is driven to attend Holy Communion at one or other of the churches in the town.'[311]

The wider agenda of the broad churchmen spearheading the 1854 reforms should be interpreted in a similar fashion. Following the 1854 Act many fellowships were made

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308 *Command Papers 1873*, C.856-II, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Property and Income of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and of the Colleges and Halls therein*, p. 878; mandatory chapel attendance was not formally lifted from all colleges until after the Second World War; see Keith Thomas, 'College Life, 1945–1970', in Brian Harrison, (ed.), *History of the University of Oxford: the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 201.

309 An evidence-based study on the general purpose and function of the college chapels in nineteenth-century Oxford remains to be written.

310 Ffrench, 'Reminiscences of Oxford', p. 127.

311 Anthony C. Deane, 'The Religion of the Undergraduate', *Nineteenth Century: a Monthly Review,* 38 (October 1895), p. 677.

available to lay people, and in some churches, such as St Giles, none of the appointed ministers was a college fellow.[312] The colleges retained patronage, but ministers no longer had automatic connections with them. This was another example of an issue being addressed in the 1852 Oxford University Commission in order to improve the quality of religiosity within the University. It recorded that while the requirement for Fellows to be in orders added a valuable clerical element to Oxford and maintained the University's historical connection with the Church, it should nevertheless be reformed because otherwise it encouraged individuals to enter holy orders for misguided motives, and drew them into religious controversies that compromised the University's reformist agenda to be a more professional academy.[313]

William Ince noted that although the number of fellows taking holy orders had greatly diminished, 'the whole type of clerical Fellows is nobler and truer' than before the 1854 Act: 'Those who now take holy orders devote themselves, all from free choice, without any such external control as the statutes of their college.'[314]

Finally, despite the University's move to a more secularized culture, its presence in Oxford continued to the end of the century to establish an almost unique concentration of Anglican clergymen in the city. Clayton estimated in 1898 that alongside the 65 clergy in Oxford doing parochial work, there were more than 220 clergymen living and working in the city in other capacities.[315] Towards the end of

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312 Catherine Barrington-Ward, *St Giles' Church Oxford*, rev. edn (Oxford: Parchments of Oxford, 2014), p. 41.

313 Oxford University Commission 1852, (22) no. 1482, *Report ... into the State, Discipline, Studies, and Revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford, together with the Evidence* pp. 143–45, 163–66

314 Ince, 'Church and Universities', p. 329.

315 Clayton, *Spiritual Needs of Oxford*, p. 8.

the century two complementary religious institutions were founded. Pusey House was established 1884 to ensure that 'dogmatic Christian teaching would continue to be taught at Oxford'.[316] The subscriptions raised were sufficient to fund three chaplain/librarians whose chief duties were 'to lecture in divinity and to assist young men who may have doubts or difficulties on religious questions'.[317] In 1893 the Evangelical Pastorate for University Men was set up to assist the clergy at the five evangelical churches and 'take up the spiritual side of the ideal tutor's work'.[318] It employed two clergy, and from its inception it encouraged University students to work as volunteers for city parishes during the term, and in parishes further afield during the vacation.[319]

Pastoral attitudes

This chapter has so far identified patterns in clergy provision over the nineteenth century, with deep changes to University culture and religious attitudes observable by the mid-century. Alongside these University developments, following meetings early in his episcopacy Wilberforce was also keenly aware that many of the parishes in this review were suffering from historical neglect. In his notes, he writes that Headington was 'a miserable account of neglect' and Headington Quarry 'a total failure', while Marston was in a state of 'utter demoralization', and at St Cross Holywell the shopkeepers were very irreligious and the college servants 'a most

316 'Opening of the Pusey Memorial House', (11 October 1884), p. 5.
317 'The Pusey memorial', *OT* (11 October 1884), p. 5; the three librarians all held other positions.
318 'Evangelical Pastorate for University Men', *JOJ* (22 April 1893), p. 5.
319 Mark Smith, 'A Foundation of Influence: the Oxford Pastorate and Elite Recruitment in Early Twentieth-Century Anglican Evangelicalism', in Deryck W. Lovegrove, (ed.), *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 208.

unsatisfactory set of men'. At St Mary Magdalen there were 'a considerable number of the lowest class in gutter etc.' and at St Peter in the East Wilberforce had noted an 'indifference to public worship … all regularly visited by ladies of parish for temporal wants'.[320]

Bearing this in mind, it is possible to use the visitation returns to shed light on how ministers in the second half of the century treated their responsibilities differently from ministers working 1801–38. All the visitation returns in this study reserved space for the minister to raise concerns or local hindrances with his bishop. The open-ended nature of the question and the often generous allocation of space distinguished it from all other requests for information.[321] Many of the replies raised more than one issue, and if the hundreds of responses to this question are allocated to selected topics it is possible to aggregate the data and identify changes in how ministers interpreted and responded to perceived challenges in their work.[322]

The data (Graph 3-15 and Graph 3-16, p. 208) display clear differences of distribution 1802–38 and 1854–99, raising questions about how the ministers' concerns changed over time, and what the differences in their responses might indicate. Clergy from 1854 on communicated on a wider range of issues to their bishop, and developed a

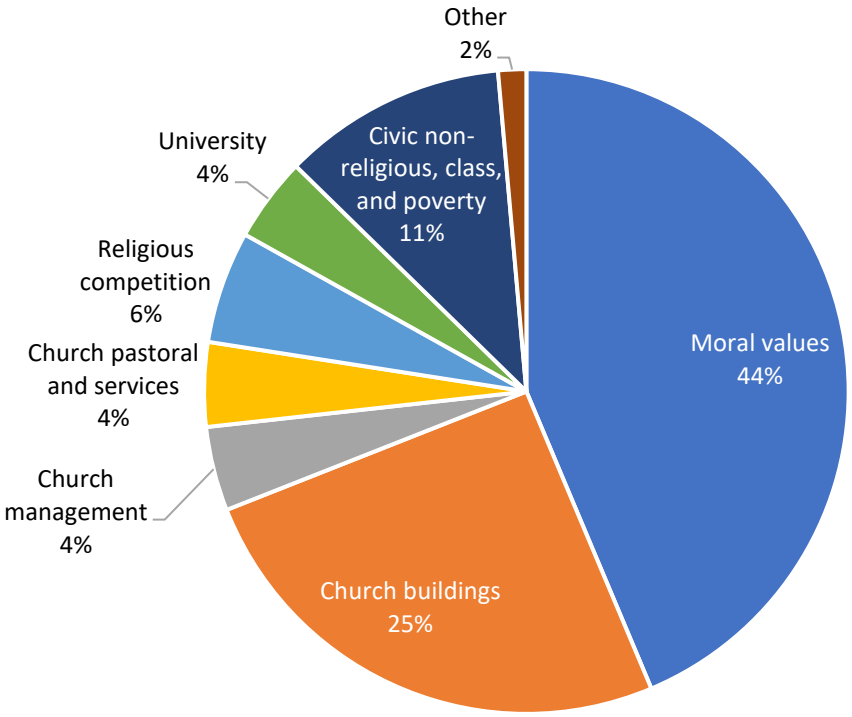
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320 Wilberforce, *Diocese Books of Wilberforce,* pp. 196, 226, 239, 249.

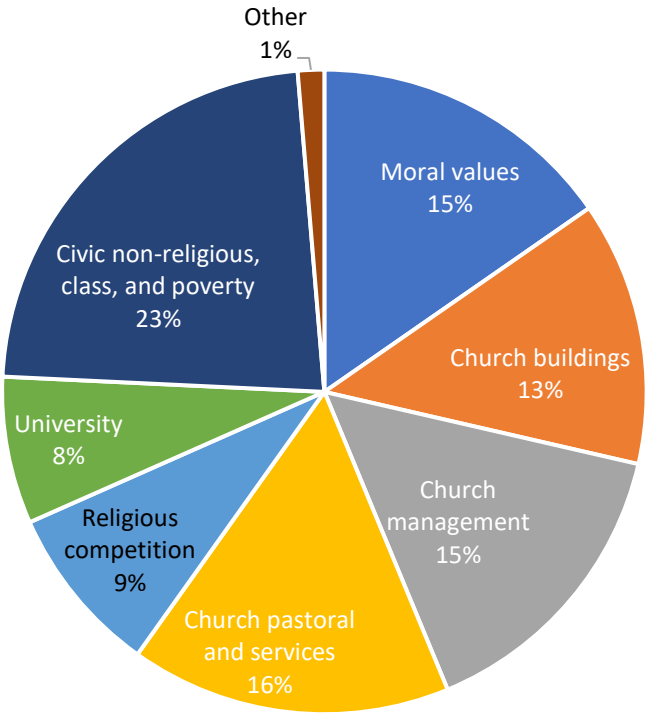
321 The longest reply, with 354 words, was from H.B. Walton in VR 1854, Holywell St Cross.

322 In total 606 points have been compiled. The responses over the second half of the century are so evenly distributed that breaking these answers into two discrete timespans (for example 1854–75 and 1875–99) does not change the results by more than one or two percentiles. For that reason the replies 1854–99 have been kept as a single unit for the purposes of comparison.

Graph 3-15 Hindrances: complete, 1802–38



Graph 3-16 Hindrances: complete, 1854–99



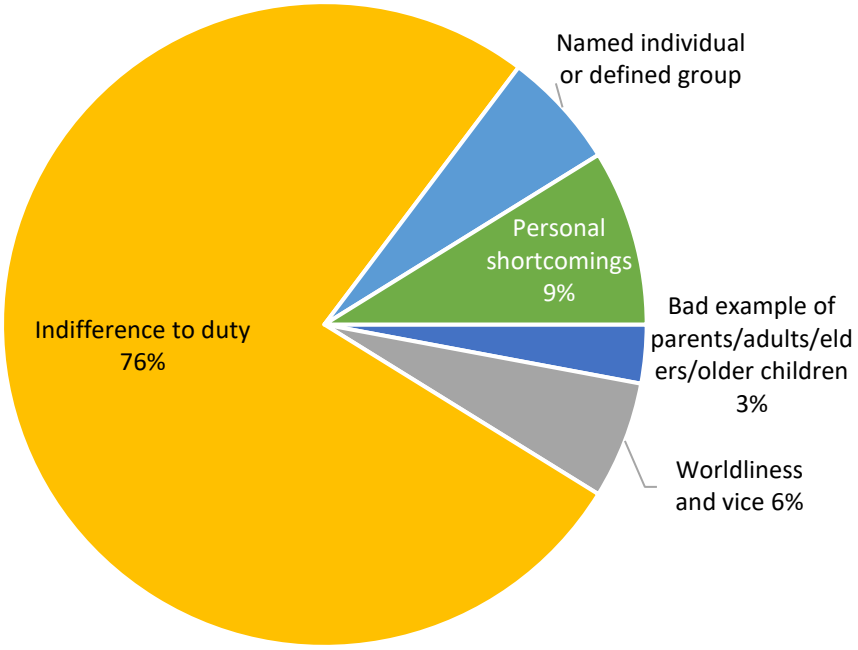
more nuanced attitude to interpreting and expressing local impediments. The main disparities were in the categories Moral values and Church buildings, which as a pair from 1802 to 1838 constituted just under 70% of the responses, but from 1854 to 1899 accounted for only 28% of all answers.

Shortcomings with church buildings were mentioned in 25% of hindrance answers 1802–38, with this percentage falling to 13% after 1854. Civic issues, shortcomings of church management, and pastoral provision were only rarely cited as impediments in the first period, but became more frequently raised as issues in the second half of the century.

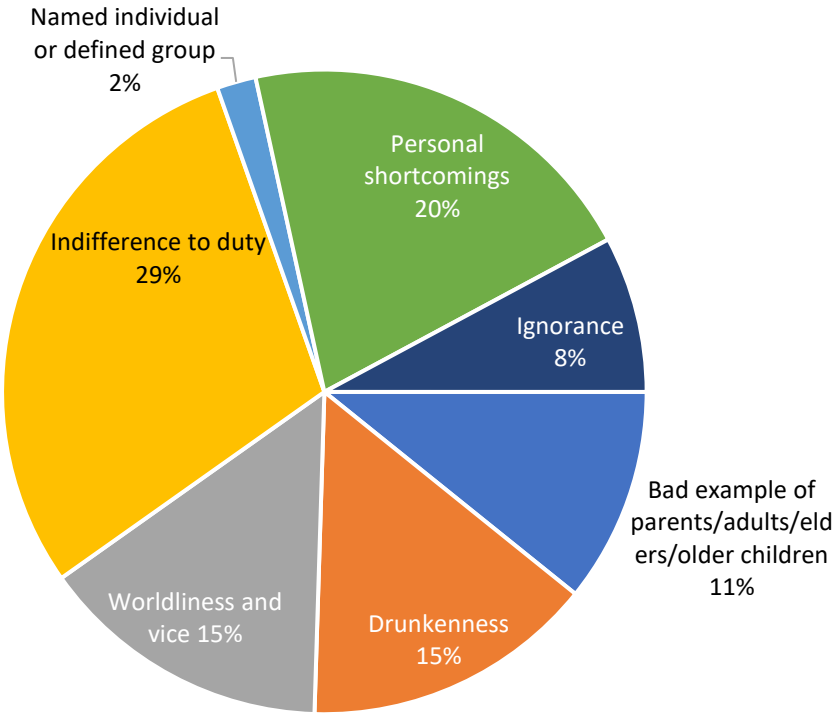
The category with the widest degree of difference over the century and within which most change occurred is the category I have designated 'Moral values'. This category has been applied to hindrances in the returns that describe behaviour or circumstances relating to a person's internal decision-making or ethical choices. This category elicited the overwhelming majority of responses in the first half of the century; in the second half it remained an issue of primary concern, even though as a percentage the category had reduced significantly.

When the Moral values category itself is broken down into further subsets the degree of change between the two halves of the century is still further pronounced (Graph 3-17 and Graph 3-18, p. 210). In the first half of the century, clergy interpreted undesirable moral agency almost entirely in terms of an individual's indifference to duty, and nearly all the comments — 76% — fall into this sub-category. The

Graph 3-17 Hindrances: moral values, 1802–38



Graph 3-18 Hindrances: moral values, 1854–99



parishioner's attitude to the Church was deemed one of 'entire unconcern',[323] they had 'a habit of indolence and a hardened indifference to religion',[324] and an 'indifference on the subject [of religion]'.[325] This 'total carelessness'[326] was most consistently construed as exemplifying a failure properly to understand religious duty. Parishioners, and especially the lower orders,[327] suffered from 'idleness and inattention to their duty',[328] they lacked 'the want of a proper Sense of their Duty',[329] or had an 'entire negligence of all Religious Duties'.[330] Other moral criticisms, such as William Hawkins's complaint of 'a criminal preference of worldly pursuits and pleasures' within St Aldate parishioners, were in the minority.[331]

In the second half of the century a wider range of moral-related impediments were described, although issues regarding duty remained a frequently-mentioned concern. As Smith resignedly noted in 1890, 'it is difficult to conquer a good deal of Religious indifference'.[332] At St Thomas in 1860 Chamberlain wrote that 'poverty and indifference are the main hindrances'; six years later little had changed, with Chamberlain noting that 'the chief cause of neglect is indifference'.[333] Such observations recurred throughout the century in all parishes: in 1890 alone

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323 VR 1811, St Aldate.
324 VR 1802, Iffley St Mary the Virgin.
325 VR 1820, St Giles.
326 VR 1817, Cowley St James.
327 VRs 1808, St Aldate; 1814, St Mary Magdalen; 1834, Cowley St James.
328 VR 1805, Headington St Andrew.
329 VR 1808, St Aldate.
330 VR 1805, St Mary Magdalen.
331 VR 1814, St Aldate; this response was categorized as 'vice'.
332 VR 1890, Summertown St John the Baptist.
333 VRs 1860, 1866, St Thomas.

indifference was mentioned in seven returns.[334] Indifference was seen not only as a lack of duty, but as an absence of individual ideology and conviction: at Cowley St James Benson wrote about a 'want of *heartiness* in *any* religious purpose, in many cases amounting to positive infidelity'.[335] And at SS Mary and Nicholas, Green wrote on the parishioners' 'indifference … a spirit of independence fostered by political feeling'.[336]

In a collection of prayers for children, duty to God was presented as comparable to obligation to demonstrate gratitude for their parents' provision[337] and in devotional texts for adults duty to the Clergy was presented as akin to the responsibility a servant might have to a master, or an employee to an employer.[338] Duty was performed within a relationship of power, and was used to describe not only a sinner's obligation to God, but a parishioner's obligation to their Church and its Clergy, ideally as an expression of gratitude for the work the Church (and by extension Christ) was doing for them.

The connection between duty and piety did not necessarily diminish over the century and Graph 3-17 and Graph 3-18 (p. 210) should not be interpreted as representing such a change. In his four charges as bishop of Oxford in the 1890s, for example, a

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334 In 1890 these parishes were Headington St Andrew, Headington Quarry, Iffley St Mary, St Aldate, St Ebbe, St Paul, and St Peter in the East; for other examples see VRs 1854, Holywell and Binsey; VRs 1857, Cowley St James and St Mary Magdalen; VRs 1860, St Aldate and Binsey; and VR 1869, Cowley St James: many other examples abound.

335 VR 1843, Cowley St James, emphasis is Benson's.

336 VR 1890, SS Mary and Nicholas.

337 Helen S. Herschell, *The Child's Help to Self-Examination and Prayer* (London: J. Unwin, 1835), pp. 101–03.

338 Thomas Henry Benjamin Bund, *Aids to a Holy Life, in Forms for Self-Examination* (London: W. J. Cleaver, 1846), pp. 36–37.

deontological understanding of religious ethics informs all of Stubbs's exhortations, with 'duty' referred to over 80 times to posit man's obligations to others and to God. The Church of England, in Stubbs's eyes, has a 'duty to the great body in whose care is deposited the Christianity of the English Nation'.[339] For Bishop Mackarness also, duty was essential to a successful ministerial life.[340]

The two charts above demonstrate a shift in the clergy's changing approach to sin: not necessarily pertaining to doctrine but, as discussed by Erdozain, within the wider context of secularization and its implication of the need for a practical, operational ministry.[341] The visitation returns were not doctrinal papers; rather they allowed the clergy to provide details to the bishop on what was hindering their work. In the first half of the century, the overwhelming interpretation by the clergy of the material expression of sin was focussed on the private spiritual condition of their parishioners. By the second half of the century the focus had widened to include the material realm of physical things. Ministers, now living within the parish and with a greater commitment to their religious calling, displayed a better awareness of the concrete issues that hindered their work.

Class identification in the 1802–38 period focussed exclusively on the lower orders: at St Clement the poor were identified as being 'very negligent'[342]; at St Mary

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339 William Stubbs, 'First Visitation Charge, ... 1890', in E.E. Holmes, (ed.), *Visitation Charges Delivered to the Clergy and Church-Wardens of the Dioceses of Chester and Oxford* (London: Longman, 1904), p. 67.

340 John Fielder Mackarness, *A Charge intended to have been delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford, ... May 9, 1881* (Oxford: Parker & Co., 1881), p. 16.

341 Dominic Erdozain, 'The Secularisation of Sin in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 62/1/1 (2010), p. 61; Erdozain focuses on nineteenth-century evangelicalism.

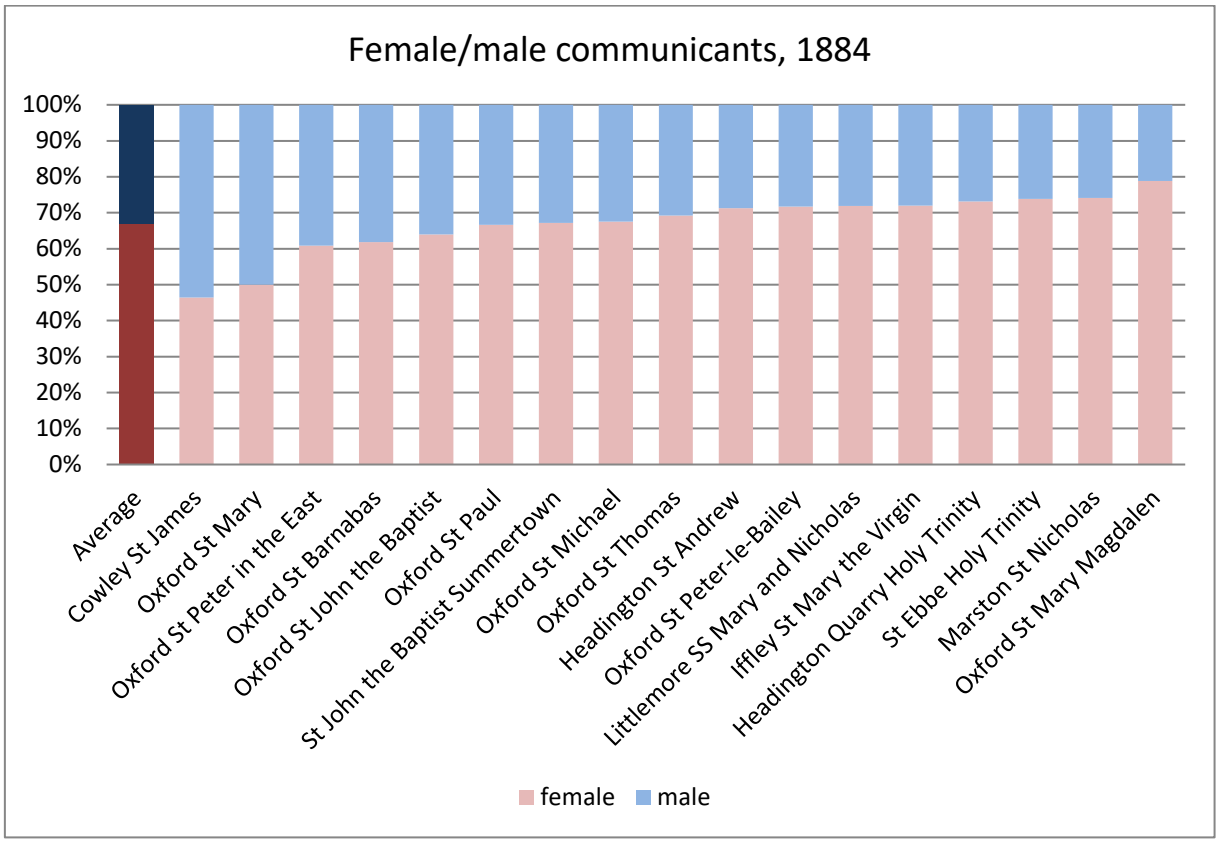
342 VR 1834, St Clement.

Magdalen they were people 'of the worst nature',[343] and elsewhere absenteeism was located primarily in the 'poorer class'.[344] In the second half of the century clergy showed greater sensitivity to issues affecting the lower classes and answered the hindrance questions with greater specificity, describing issues such as poverty, drunkenness, and civic distractions that may have hindered the church's ministry. At Holywell, incumbent Henry Walton wrote in 1857 of 'carnal mindedness [assisted by] greedy landlords', in 1860 of 'disreputable houses', and in 1866 described 'low miserable dwellings situated to engender and feed vice and immorality'[345]. Poor standards of education were sometimes noted as a hindrance, such as at Holy Trinity Headington Quarry in 1860 where incumbent Samuel Mangin complained of 'the neglect of the education of the inhabitants' and later at Summertown Alfred Smith wrote that 'the rough nature of the work [brickyards] keeps the men ignorant'[346]. Instances identifying the upper classes are far fewer but not altogether absent: at Cowley St James, Benson wrote in 1854 of 'selfishness in all and niggardliness especially in the upper'.[347] In 1872 he noted at Cowley St John that 'a large number of the population are quite godless and indifferent. The worst parts of Oxford have supplied us with a good many in consequence of its improvements in the city.'[348] In his 1869 charge Wilberforce reported that the returns had identified drunkenness as 'by a vast consensus of opinion … the greatest hindrance amongst us to the spread of

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343 VR 1814, St Mary Magdalen.
344 VR 1808, St Aldate.
345 VRs 1857, 1860, 1866, St Cross Holywell.
346 VR 1890, St John the Baptist Summertown.
347 VR 1854, Cowley St James.
348 VR 1872, Cowley St John. The improvements referred to are mostly the replacing of low-quality housing with University buildings, that led to the population of Oxford's central parishes declining.

Graph 3-19 Communicants as a percentage of female and male, 1884



the Gospel'.[349] In Oxford temperance was promoted by both Tractarians and evangelicals, though the issues were seen to conflict with liberal ideals on moral progress and individual liberty, and so generated both support and opposition within the Church.[350]

Finally, gender was also deemed a significant factor: at St Barnabas, for example, Noel wrote that 'most of the women and children come to church *very fairly regularly* and

349 Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge Delivered to the Diocese of Oxford, at his Eighth Visitation* (London, 1869), p. 8.

350 H.J. Ellison, 'Parochial Temperance Societies', *CC* (1862) [vicar, New Windsor, Berks., and prebendary of Lichfield].

most of the men come *at times*: but it is difficult to reclaim especially the men from carelessness …'.[351] The 1884 visitation returns in this study corroborate Noel's concerns, with nearly all the parishes in this review attracting more female than male communicants (Graph 3-19, p. 215).

Conclusion

Regarding the clergy in this thesis, this chapter has identified a critical moment of change from 1854. In the second half of the century the officiating minister remained in the parish for longer, and had moved from rooms in college to a more accessible parsonage in the parish. He was more likely to be married and have children who, alongside an increasing number of assistant curates, could support his pastoral work. In parishes where a University college owned the advowson, the number of ministers selected on the basis that they were part of that college steadily diminished. At Oxford, from the second half of the century church party divisions slowly relaxed their grip over Anglican ministry.

At the same time, these ministers were more experienced, and carried out their work with what seems a higher sense of religious calling and piety. Although relatively poorer, ministers in the second half of the century remained part of the more respectable classes in Oxford life. Furthermore, Oxford visitation records provide evidence of clergy reflecting on their pastoral work in more pragmatic, thoughtful and practical ways in the second part of the nineteenth century. Over the century individual ministers with clear allegiances to a specific church party managed at

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[351] VR 1878, St Barnabas.

times to exert influence at Oxford that was disproportionate to their party's numbers. But the majority of clergy in this chapter would have likely considered themselves to be moderate high churchmen, and in that context the increase in numbers and commitment identified in this chapter can be seen as a reenergizing of high churchmanship. The impact this had on church life and growth will be explored further in chapters four and five.

4: Material presence and religious competition

During the Napoleonic Wars that followed the French Revolution, English society was regarded by the Church as relatively unstable. Bishop John Randolph's 1802 and 1805 visitation charges at Oxford reflected his strong belief in the contribution of the Church and the parochial system to maintaining local order, in part through a theologically-driven conviction that social harmony between the classes was God-ordained.[1] Within the Church two key challenges were identified: 1) insufficient space to hold religious services and meetings for an increasing number of parishioners, especially in urban parishes; and 2) a rise in religious pluralism, with mounting competition from nonconforming religions, both protestant and Roman Catholic. The 1848 revolutions in Europe, as well as the publication of the 1851

[1] John Randolph, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford* (Oxford: University Press, 1802); Randolph, *Charge 1805*.

religious census, highlighted anew the same concerns, and they remained germane and vital throughout the century.

The visitation returns in this study reflect the importance of these two issues: over the century questions on church building and fabric steadily increased, and responses concerning dissent appear more frequently than any other issue up to 1880, following which it greatly subsided. The first two parts that comprise this chapter examine each in turn. The first section considers how Clergy responded to a growing need for more capacity in Anglican church buildings and demonstrates the increased vigour in parish work taking place during the second half of the nineteenth century. The second section reviews both Roman Catholicism and nonconformity in Oxford, and draws on a range of data sources in order to make sense of their inclusion in returns that, by necessity, record their activity through the eyes of the officiating minister at each parish. It is clear that the nonconformists also invested greatly in their places of worship in order to establish their material presence and status within Oxford. A section examining the 1851 religious census completes the chapter and establishes some context for the issue of attendances that are examined in chapter five.

Throughout the century the class-focused framework within which these matters were interpreted remained in place. Concern continued within the Church that the consequence of rising dissent was less a revival of true Christianity than a disruption of the parochial social and religious balance, 'releasing discontents and animosities which ought to be kept under control'.[2] In 1848 Wilberforce directly addressed the

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[2] Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 151.

middle-class churchwardens in a separate charge, telling them that the labouring classes

> never will bear so cheerfully the comparative hardships of their own lot, [than] when they feel practically that the difference between the various ranks of society is itself God's appointment, and is intended for the good of all.[3]

Bishop Mackarness in his 1872 charge noted that 'the Church of England comprises the majority of the people of England, and an overwhelming majority of those whose learning, fortune, or birth, place them in the foremost rank'.[4] Despite many dissenting chapels clearly working to attract the middle classes, many Clergy viewed dissent primarily as a working-class or lower-middle class phenomenon and so positioned themselves as part of — and for some Clergy at the apex of — a social elite whose beliefs and responsibilities transcended those of the lower orders.[5]

The stones of Oxford

By 1810 the need for the Church to increase its accommodation nationally had become widely acknowledged by its Clergy, and the pamphleteering and lobbying that led to the passing of the Church Building Acts of 1818 and 1824 came from a wide base of both evangelical and high-church Anglicans.[6] Where hindrances to

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3 Samuel Wilberforce, *Address to the Churchwardens of the Diocese, in a Charge* (London: Francis and John Rivington, 1848), p. 6.

4 Mackarness, *1872 Charge*, p. 13; Mackarness nevertheless wanted as far as possible to concede legal equality with dissenters, although he considered their political goals paradoxical, see *ibid.*, pp. 16, 27–30.

5 For example: 'Among those who are bound to exert their influence for the benefit of their benighted countrymen, the clergy of course demand the first place', see Henry William Wilberforce, *The Parochial System, an Appeal to English Churchmen* (London: J.G. and F. Rivington, 1838), p. 108.

6 M.H. Port, *600 New Churches: the Church Building Commission, 1818–1856*, new edn (Reading: Spire Books, 2006), pp. 15–35.

church work were raised in the Oxford visitation returns 1802–38, 25% of these returns identified the inadequacy of church buildings as a hindrance in their parish.[7]

The Church Building Commission (CBC) ran from 1818 to 1856, and a policy change by the Commission following the 1824 Act led to it issuing many grants for smaller sums, usually £100–£300.[8] The only church in this thesis built with funds from these grants was Holy Trinity Headington Quarry. At the same time the Society for the Promotion and Enlargement of Churches and Chapels (later renamed the Incorporated Church Building Society or ICBS) was established, and acted as a private counterpart to the CBC. The ICBS was more focused on ensuring free seats for all, and had a greater influence in promoting gothic architecture than the CBC.[9] Over the course of the nineteenth century, grants from the ICBS helped fund eight of the new churches in the parishes under review, and in ten other churches ICBS grants defrayed the cost of increasing the number of free sittings by enlarging the building or reordering its interior.

The parish church building was regarded by clergy to be a physical, proselytizing embodiment that could communicate divine presence, moral values, and sacred status for the people who lived near it, walked past it, and, ideally, worshipped inside. Over the nineteenth century, existing medieval church structures were singled out and appreciated for their intrinsic capacity to communicate the Church's endurance

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7 This percentage reduced to 13% of hindrances mentioned 1854–99, see above, p. 207 for more context.

8 Port, *600 New Churches: the Church Building Commission, 1818–1856*.

9 Gill Hedley, *Free Seats for All: the Boom in Church Building after Waterloo* (London: Umbria Press, 2018), p. 30.

and immutability over the centuries, with the stones from which they were built a lasting testimony of God's timeless nature, purpose, and forgiveness.

For Ruskin, writing in 1851 in the first volume of *The Stones of Venice*, the buildings of Venice, the very stones, were a record of a city's emotional, intellectual, and actual history. They coalesced into a 'sort of apotheosis of associationism'[10] that delivered an 'awful warning' to England and its empiric ambitions.[11] Oxford's architecture reflected its own set of ideas and associations, with its antiquity, religiousness, and academic focus forming what some considered a type of 'English Athens'.[12] The city exhibited a picture of the contemplative life of studious thought, the religiosity within which any such pursuit of the truth could be undertaken, and its buildings were a record of how this process had been taking place for many centuries. Since the Reformation the complex of buildings that formed collegiate architecture at Oxford was the closest active example of a medieval monastic institution that existed in England. The chapel, quadrangle, dining hall, library, and sleeping quarters were direct parallels to the church, cloister, refectory, scriptorium, and dormitories of the pre-Reformation era. The social ordering of the college invited similar comparisons, with the exclusively male college whose principal, don, and student aligned with the abbot, monks, and novices. When the bishop of Tennessee, Charles Quintard, visited

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10 George Leonard Hersey, *High Victorian Gothic: a Study in Associationism* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 30.

11 Sarah Quill, *Ruskin's Venice: the Stones Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 19.

12 John Dougill, *Oxford in English Literature: the Making, and Undoing, of "The English Athens"* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), passim.

England in 1867 he travelled from London to Oxford on his first Sunday: Oxford was for him 'that consecrated spot' and a visible picture of England's civilization.[13]

The parish churches materially contributed to Oxford's central identity and meaning, in keeping with the overt religiosity that many of the University colleges and halls evoked. *Alden's Oxford Guide* opens with two comparative lists: the colleges and halls on the left, and the parish churches on the right[14] (Image 4-1). Oxford's churches

Image 4-1 List of key buildings of interest in Alden's 1876 city guide



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13 Bishop of Tennessee, 'Church Education of Young People and Adults: Discussion', *CC* (1867), p. 127.

14 *Alden's Oxford Guide: with a Key Plan of the University and City*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Edward C. Alden, 1876), p. v; this layout was followed until at least 1896.

were regarded as 'one of its most prominent features … in close proximity to one another, as well as very conspicuous … These churches all stand, more or less, clear of the houses, and have good towers or spires'.[15] The churches within the city established Oxford's public identity and were appreciated for their meaningful contribution to the streetscape. Furthermore, unlike the colleges, most people entering and exploring an Oxford church could do so as members of the Church of England. In this sense the city's ancient churches occupied an intriguing middle ground between the city and the University. When plans were put forward for a new building for St Martin Carfax, it was noted that 'this is something more than a mere Parish affair … the re-building of Carfax Church must be a subject of interest to both University and City.'[16]

Table 4-1 New church buildings

Date	Church	Status	Cost	*Cost 1899*[17]
1814–16	St Ebbe	Church unsound: rebuilt	£3,000[18]	*£5,951*
1820–22	St Martin Carfax	Church unsound: rebuilt	£3,370[19]	*£7,616*
1826	Oxford St Clement	Church too small: relocated and rebuilt	£6,530[20]	*£13,550*
1831–32	Summertown St John the Baptist	New district taken from St Giles: new building	£1,600[21]	*£3,328*

15 'Architectural Progress in Oxford: Part II – The Churches – The University Church', *The Building News* (16 Jan 1857), pp. 58–60, p. 58.

16 *JOJ* (13 February 1819), p. 5 [letter to the editor].

17 Cost comparisons need to be taken with considerable caution, as they could be calculated very differently based on what was being included in the sum. Cost converted to 1899 values at https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/.

18 George Thomas Cameron, '1860 Parochial Survey', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: questionnaire pasted into Samuel Wilberforce's 'Records of the Diocese'.

19 Tiller, *Church and Chapel*.

20 *ibid.*.

21 ICBS 1336; see 'Architectural Progress in Oxford: Part II – The Churches – St Thomas's', *Building News* (27 February 1857), pp. 299–301; and 'Architectural Progress in Oxford: Part II – The Churches – St Thomas's', *Building News* (27 March 1857), pp. 203–06.

Date	Church	Status	Cost	*Cost 1899*[17]
1835–36	St Paul	New parish taken from St Giles and St Thomas: new building[22]		
1836	Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	New building	£665[23]	*£1,350*
1845	Oxford St Ebbe Holy Trinity	Chapel of ease: new building	£3,700[24]	*£7,284*
1849	Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	Chapel of ease: new building	£2,209[25]	*£4,287*
1849	Oxford St Mary Magdalen: St George	Chapel of ease: new building	£5,000[26]	*£9,703*
1862	Oxford SS Philip and James	New district taken from St Giles: new building	£6,300[27]	*£10,750*
1869	Oxford St Barnabas	New district taken from St Paul: new build	£6,500[28]	*£9,435*
1872	Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	Chapel of ease: new building	£2,500[29]	*£3,469*
1874	Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	Relocated: new build	£6,586[30]	*£8,428*
1879–83	Cowley St John SS Mary and John	New parish taken from Cowley		
1883–93	North Oxford St Margaret	New district taken from St Giles	£5,500[31]	*£6,687*
1891	Oxford St Aldate: St Matthew Grandpont	Chapel of ease: new building	£7,500[32]	*£8,862*
1894–96	Cowley St John St John the Evangelist	New build	£12,000[33]	*£12,750*
		Average	**£4,864**	***£7,563***

22 Vivian, 'Architectural Progress in Oxford: Part II – The Churches – St Paul's', *The Building News* (29 May 1857), pp. 543–44.

23 Peter Howell, 'Newman's Church at Littlemore', Oxford Art Journal, 6/1 (1983), p. 51; the higher figure of £3550 provided in the 1851 Religious Census included the costs of later work up to 1851; for a breakdown that calculates the 1836 costs at a higher £1010 see Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860.

24 Tiller, *Church and Chapel*.

25 *ibid.*.

26 *ibid.*.

27 'Consecration of the Church of St Philip and St James', *JOJ* (10 May 1862), p. 5.

28 Encyclopaedia of Oxford, p. 378; however, the cost was differently estimated at 'about £4,000' in *ODC,* 1869, p. 138.

29 'The original contract was £3,990, but owing to the lack of funds, not more than about £2,500 has been spent.', *ODC*, 1873, p. 151.

30 *ODC,* 1875, p. 166.

31 'The New Mission Church of St Margaret', *JOJ* (12 May 1883), p. 5.

32 'St Matthew's Church, Grandpont', *JOJ* (31 October 1891), p. 8.

33 'The New Church', *Cowley Evangelist* (1894).

Oxford church building

The Victorian period has been described as an age of church building and Oxford was no exception. The provision of sufficient churches with adequate room was one of the Church's main — and certainly among its most expensive — strategies for demonstrating its authority and universal presence in the minds of its parishioners. In the Oxford churches under review 17 new Anglican churches were added at a fairly even rate throughout the century (Table 4-1, p. 224). Of these, 13 were new churches entirely, two replaced an older structure that was unsound, and two were relocated to a quieter location with space to be larger. In six instances the new church was built within a new parish or district made up of land taken from older 'ancient' parishes: a process that brought in more Clergy but also risked eroding the parochial sense of community as civic and religious boundaries started to be no longer coterminous.[34] Recognition of the need for better buildings is evidenced throughout the Oxford visitation returns. In St James Cowley in 1802, the incumbent William Carey wrote that the church was 'always full … not large enough to contain half the inhabitants of the Parish.' Lack of space was mentioned at Oxford St Mary (1802, 1805)[35], St Andrew Headington (1808)[36], St Giles (1808)[37], and St Aldate (1811, 1814).[38] At St Cross Holywell in 1814, Francis Dyson wrote 'there are none who would absent themselves, if the Church was sufficiently large to contain them.'[39] At St Ebbe in 1838, John Garnier wrote 'the present Church accommodation is very

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34 Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, pp. 366–67.
35 VRs 1802, 1805, Oxford St Mary.
36 VR 1808, Headington St Andrew.
37 VR 1808, St Giles.
38 VRs 1811, 1814, St Aldate.
39 VR 1814, St Cross Holywell.

inadequate'[40] (this inadequacy was felt even following a new building 1814–16 and a new gallery 1826). By 1857 the minister at St Giles noted that the parish now needed at least two more church buildings.[41]

Some churches were replaced with new buildings altogether, such as St Martin (1820–22) which was considered too dilapidated to warrant repair. St Clement, also in need of repair, was considered too small for its burgeoning population and on a site too small to accommodate a larger structure. A new St Clement (1826) was built close by and the older church demolished. New churches were added: Summertown (1832), St Paul (1835–36; Jericho), Littlemore (1836), St George the Martyr (1850; St Mary Magdalen), and Holy Trinity in Headington Quarry (1848–49). In the second half of the century only one church was demolished and replaced with another: St Peter-le-Bailey was relocated away from its busy roadside location to a new site about 100 yards north (1874). But many new churches were built: SS Philip and James (1862; St Giles), St Barnabas (1869; Jericho), St Frideswide (1872; St Thomas), SS Mary and John (1875–76; St John Cowley), St Margaret (1884; North Oxford), St Matthew (1890; Grandpont), and St John the Evangelist (1894–96; Cowley St John).

Funding

Building a new church was a significant undertaking for any parish. The decision to do so could not be taken lightly as it would usually consume key resources within the local church for a number of years and demanded effort for the minister.[42] The

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40 VR 1838, St Ebbe.

41 VR 1857, St Giles.

42 For an interesting local study on this process see Martin Coppen, *Pillars of the Church: Building a New Parish Church in Andover, Hampshire, 1840–1849* (Andover, Hampshire: Maryacre Publishing, 2016).

curacy position that Newman took at St Clement in 1824 had been created specifically to have a more energetic clergyman to oversee the church there being rebuilt.[43] Progress included acquiring an appropriate plot of land, if necessary, along with official approval to proceed from the diocesan and civic authorities. A building committee would need to be formed that would include members of higher society, ideally nobility, to add status to the endeavour and attract subscriptions from the local elite. An architect would be chosen, along with a design that met the approval of the committee, and, in due course, a builder who could be trusted to carry out the architect's plans.

During the process money inevitably needed to be raised, which entailed drawing upon a network of connections and contacts, arranging fundraising meetings, including special sermons with a collection, and visiting door-to-door. This could be an exhausting process: St Aldate minister Christopher noted that for St Matthew Grandpont he had written thousands of letters requesting support, 'a good many between four and six in the morning'.[44] Arrangements with the architect and builder could result in an agreement to delay paying charges for several years, allowing the project to start without having raised all the needed money.[45]

Further money might be found through various charities and building societies, but applying for these took time, and accepting such grants often meant agreeing to conditions that required modifying designs already approved. In nearly all instances in Oxford, the money available for a new church was relatively modest. The average

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43 Newman, *Autobiographical Writings*.
44 'St Matthew's Church, Grandpont', *JOJ* (31 October 1891), p. 8.
45 G.F. Bodley, 'New Church', *Cowley Evangelist* (1894).

cost for the 15 new parish church buildings in this review was just under £5,000 (adjusted to 1899 a little over £7,500) and this was not enough to establish a high-status structure.

With the exception of the church at Littlemore, and perhaps Street's church SS Philip and James, none of the new parish churches has made its way into national religious histories or national surveys on ecclesiological architecture. The most prestigious architect was Scott, but his design for Holy Trinity in Headington Quarry reflects a general conservatism and regularity found in many of his churches, making them what his biographer Stamp sums up as 'frankly, a little dull'.[46] Other important architects included Arthur Blomfield, George Frederick Bodley, and George Edmund Street. The rest are barely remembered or, when they are, for other works: for example Robertson's east entrance to the University Press 1826–27 is well recognized, but his design of St Clement much less so. With a budget of £12,000 Bodley's St John the Evangelist was the most impressive new church building covered in this review and is discussed below.

Building process

Once sufficient funds had been raised, the actual building could begin, marked with the laying of a cornerstone, perhaps in the company of the bishop and members of the press. Reaching this stage could not be taken for granted; in 1853 Benson had raised £480 towards a plan by Street to extend the church of St James in Cowley to accommodate an extra 250 people but the project faltered because adequate funds

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[46] Jennifer Sherwood and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Oxfordshire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 337; Gavin Stamp, *Gothic for the Steam Age: an Illustrated Biography of George Gilbert Scott* (London: Aurum Press, 2015), p. 102.

were not raised.[47] 10 years later Benson revived these plans and a second drive in 1864 was successful.[48] Once building had started, the project needed to be constantly managed to track ongoing costs, resolve unexpected expenses, and ensure that materials and workmanship met agreed standards. If all was successful the church would officially be opened, and the bishop paid to consecrate it.[49]

Architecture and design

In Oxford, direct questions on the fabric of the church first appeared in the 1834 visitation returns. From 1854 a question about updates 'either as to the fabric or in the manner of fitting up' was included and in 1872 these questions were for the first time organized under a separate heading on church fabric. From then until 1899 changes to either the building, its fabric, and its windows were more systematically queried, with additional questions on insurance premiums, inventories, and details on previous alterations.

It was unusual for the consecration and opening to mark the end of the building process. Churches continued to be modified over the years as different people imposed their ideas and interests on its shape, design, and purpose. Victorian churches were not static objects and were not perceived as such by the people who used them. A new church might be functional, even beautiful, but was never

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47 ICBS 4716.

48 ICBS 5433; for correspondence of recovering plans see ICBS 4716.

49 At the consecration of St Paul, for example, Bishop Bagot charged £5/5s to attend. Preparing the petition for consecration, meeting with a few of the inhabitants of the parish to obtain their signature, and then engrossing it and forwarding it along with the Sentence of Consecration cost a further £20/15s; see OHC, PAR 212/11/C1/1 (27): charges for consecration of St Paul, 1836.

complete.[50] Consider for example the timeline for the Cowley St John church SS Mary and John. Services began there in 1879 once the chancel was adequately completed, and dedicated to the late Archbishop Charles Thomas Longley. Building continued, and in 1883 the church was finally consecrated.[51] An organ was added in 1886, and in 1891 and 1892 new windows were installed in the east and south sides respectively. In 1893 a tower and porch were added;[52] in 1911–12 vestries were built on the east end and a year later a north transept window was added. An 1883 report that work on the spire would soon start was overly optimistic; funds for a spire have to date not been realized.[53]

Over the course of the nineteenth century what constituted appropriate design for a church was a matter of much debate. Aesthetic taste, architectural form, and style of Anglican worship transitioned over different generations in an irregular overlapping fashion resulting in churches of different styles and arrangements being built at the same time. A simple schematic approach of nineteenth-century English church design divides the nineteenth century into four phases. At the start of the century ecclesiological style was mostly either romantic neoclassicism/Greek revival or Georgian/Regency gothic, with a general consensus that classical churches were more appropriate for urban settings. From the 1830s a wider following of the gothic style emerged, consciously influenced by an historical study of English medieval ecclesiology and ritual, and the Romantically-influenced Oxford Movement that put

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50 Andrew Saint, 'The Late Victorian Church', in Teresa Sladen and Andrew Saint, (eds.), *Churches, 1870–1914* (London: The Victorian Society, 2011), p. 9.
51 'Consecration of the Church of St Mary and St John, Cowley', *JOJ* (10 Nov 1883), p. 5.
52 'Consecration of SS Mary and John's Church Tower', *JOJ* (16 Sept 1893), p. 5.
53 'Consecration of the Church of St Mary and St John, Cowley', *JOJ* (10 Nov 1883), p. 5.

more value on pre-Reformation thinking. By mid-century, however, many architects were starting to draw inspiration from European gothic, resulting in a more eclectic style sometimes described as high gothic. Finally, from the 1870s to the end of the century a move away from gothic had taken hold, primarily in secular and civic architecture; new churches mostly remained gothic, but were often of a plainer and lighter quality than the muscular style earlier in the century.

The architecture of new nineteenth-century Anglican churches in this review generally aligns with this overview. When in 1820 St Martin Carfax was deemed too derelict to restore, the building committee's brief to architects simply stated their desire for a building that 'may accord with the rules of architecture, and be an appropriate ornament to the centre of the city, and … a sufficient number of free seats,'[54] It is likely a gothic design was chosen to help distinguish it from the plain classicism of the nearby Baptist and Methodist chapels.[55] The result at St Martin, however, was an unusual hybrid. Its exterior included windows in an early perpendicular style greatly out of proportion with the rest of the work, while the interior followed the design of an eighteenth-century 'auditory church': it had no chancel and the pulpit, balanced peculiarly on a stone column, mostly obscured the communion table (Image 4-2 and Image 4-3, [56] p. 233). The new church's projection into the street made it a hazard and its large windows let in so much traffic noise that

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54 'Carfax Church', *OUH* (4 March 1820), p. 3.

55 Geoffrey Tyack, *Oxford: an Architectural Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 201.

56 Henry Taunt, St Martin Carfax, interior, 1885: record CC51/00084; and exterior from the High Street, 1890: record CC51/00074, https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/.

Image 4-2 Henry Taunt: St Martin Carfax, interior, 1885



Image 4-3 St Martin Carfax, exterior from the High Street, 1890



mid-week meetings were very difficult.[57] It was pulled down in 1896 with Fletcher writing that 'it is to be regretted that the questions, whether to repair or rebuild [the original medieval structure in 1820] should have been considered at a time when architectural taste was at so low an ebb'.[58]

Preferences of style and design for a new church were frequently determined by the funding available. For example, when the building committee for the new church at St Clement advertised in *The Times* for a new design, they stipulated that the church 'may be either Grecian or Gothic, but handsome and substantial, without superfluous ornaments, and calculated to contain about 1000 persons'.[59] With a budget of £5,000, the committee initially determined that a 'Grecian building will be preferred as it is conceived that if a Gothic style were followed it would be much more expensive'. They did not mind whether it was built from brick, stone, or brick with stone coinings.[60] But their preferences were necessarily restricted by financial priorities, with the note that they 'have no objection to receiving plans and estimates in any style the Architect may prefer'.[61] Certainly some architects felt that the gothic style was the more economic option over a Grecian church.[62] Another London applicant wrote to them that in fact 'in many instances where suitable materials can be easily

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57 Walter D. Ellis, 'Free and Open Church Association', *JOJ* (15 December 1894) [letter to the editor].

58 Carteret John Halford Fletcher, *A History of the Church and Parish of St Martin (Carfax) Oxford* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1896), p. 81.

59 'To Architects and Builders', *The Times* (2 February 1825) [advertisement].

60 J. Radcliffe, OHC, St Clement's C.30 (46): letter to Joseph Lock, 5 April 1825.

61 *ibid.*, pp. 12, 14; Teresa Sladen, 'Byzantium in the Chancel: Surface Decoration and the Church Interior', in Teresa Sladen and Andrew Saint, (eds.), *Churches, 1870–1914* (London: The Victorian Society, 2011), pp. 82, 86.

62 See for example G.L.O. Moneypenny, OHC, St Clement's C.30 (70): letter to St Clement's Building Committee, 18 May 1825.

and economically procured the expense is less' and that furthermore it would be 'retrograding to adopt any other style … than the Gothic manner' because Oxford 'abounds in expressions of Gothic Architecture, not in many places surpassed'.[63] It is clear that a commission of a church in Oxford could add to an architect's status: the winner of the tender for St Clement, Daniel Robertson, stated 'I do not look to Pecuniary advantage so much, as the honor [sic] of being architect to a Church *in Oxford*'.[64]

In 1833 a new church, St Paul, was built in Jericho in a Greek revival style, and was described as 'an elegant structure' that reflected 'great credit' on the architect, Underwood.[65] The application of the classical style was considered particularly apposite as it matched the columns and portico of the entrance to the University press building on the other side of the road. Following the two eighteenth-century churches of St Peter-le-Bailey and All Saints, St Paul was the last Oxford church built in the classical church design.

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63 Richard, OHC, St Clement's C.30 (60): letter to St Clement's Building Committee, 2 May 1825 [MS damaged and author's surname missing].

64 Daniel Robertson, OHC, St Clement's C.30 (93): letter to St Clement's Building Committee, 29 May 1825, his emphasis. Certainly for Robertson the commission was to his advantage, as he was able to attract more work in Oxford, his most well-known being the design of part of the University Press's new building in Jericho, by which time he was being described as having 'done more already for the improvement of Oxford than any one man since the days of Gothic magnificence'; see 'St Clement's Church', *OUH* (3 October 1829), p. 1 [repr. of 1829 article from *The Crypt*]. His business sense was less astute however, and his willingness to work with such small margins led to him being imprisoned for debt in 1829 before the Press buildings had been completed.

65 'New Church Near the Printing Office', *JOJ* (18 June 1836), p. 3.

Pugin and SS Mary and Nicholas: a beginning

Augustus Pugin's influence on ecclesiastical architecture has been much scrutinized; the influence the city of Oxford had on Pugin much less so. By an early age he would have almost certainly been familiar with his father's drawings of gothic Oxford.[66] In 1833, a year before his conversion to Roman Catholicism at the age of 22, Pugin visited Oxford for his first time. The visit made a lasting impact. He had at the time been touring England, and in the journey found much about which to despair. At Worcester cathedral he wrote that 'the spirit of the Clergy here towards building is detestable', and at Lichfield he noted with 'horror and astonishment' that its cathedral had been restored with brown cement, his surprise diminishing upon learning that James Wyatt, 'this monster of architectural depravity, this pest of Cathedral architecture', had been responsible. From there he passed through Birmingham, 'that detestable of all detestable places' before arriving at Oxford.[67]

For Pugin the contrast was palpable. Writing to his older friend William Osmond, a stonemason in Salisbury, he remarked: 'it is impossible for me to give you an adequate idea of the interest of the city of Oxford— where at every turning you meet a buttress and face an oriel window— with what pleasure could I walk there with you—and point out the various places of interest it contains.' In particular Pugin appreciated Cottingham's 1829–33 restoration of Magdalen College chapel as 'one of the most beautiful specimens of modern design that I have ever seen and executed'.

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66 F. Mackenzie and A. Pugin, *Specimens of Gothic Architecture ... Selected from Ancient Buildings at Oxford* (London: J. Taylor, 1825).

67 A.W.N. Pugin, (ed.), *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin: Volume 1, 1830–1842*, ed. Margaret Belcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 21–23.

At this time Pugin was largely oblivious to the religious debates emerging in Oxford,[68] but he later found the Tractarians at Oxford particularly good company.[69] Pugin's hugely influential book *Contrasts*, published in 1836, was a manifesto to the higher moral purposes that he believed imbued England's pre-Reformation gothic architecture, in contradistinction to the godless, rationalist utility of eighteenth-century neo-classicism and its predecessors.[70] For Pugin and his early followers the architect's duty was to recover the pure or developed gothic style, which in Pugin's mind centred around the early English 'pointed' style.

Pugin considered Oxford 'the most Catholic-looking city in England',[71] a 'stronghold of Christian architecture'.[72] He appreciated the sheer concentration of gothic architecture present: 'There is more Catholic scholastic architecture to be found united at Oxford than any place I have ever visited.' But it was the chapels and churches that he considered the city's main feature.[73] For him the concentration of gothic architecture tied the different buildings together, helping shape Oxford into a

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68 Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain*, pbk edn (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 120.

69 A return to Oxford in 1840 at the invitation of Newman's curate at St Mary Oxford, John Bloxam, led Pugin to confide to Bloxam that 'the day I spent with you at Magdalen was one of the most delightful of my life', see Pugin, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin: Volume 1, 1830–1842*, p. 163.

70 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *Contrasts, or a Parallel Between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries and Similar Buildings of the Present Day; Shewing the Present Decay of Taste* (London: Charles Dolman, 1836).

71 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (London: John Weale, 1843), p. 3.

72 Augustus Welby Pugin, *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* (London: Charles Dolman, 1843), p. 2, fn. 1.

73 Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (London: John Weale, 1841), pp. 42, 54.

single, Catholic expression of faith, a 'complete grove of towers, spires, and pinnacled turrets, rising from the collegiate churches.'[74]

In the same year that *Contrasts* was published, an early example of church architecture that anticipated parts of Pugin's developing ideology can be found in SS Mary and Nicholas Littlemore. In the early 1830s the need to build a church in Littlemore started to be publicly reported, it being noted that 'the poorer sort of people feel aggrieved and much dissatisfied' and along with the aged and infirm were either not attending church, or joining the Baptist church already there.[75] Under Newman's direction another Underwood design was begun in 1836. It was a simple ecclesiological structure but, in the words of Beresford Hope, became 'the earliest visible specimen of a place of worship which was consciously intended to embody the Prayer-Book spirit, … the undoubted visible germ of the revived worship of the English Church'.[76] That it was a simple and austere building was due not only to theological or aesthetic principles but to comparatively modest funds: Newman needed 'capacity at moderate cost'.[77]

The design was influential for two reasons. Firstly, it demonstrated that a gothic-inspired church could be built in stone without incurring high costs, an advantage

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74 *ibid.*, p. 51.

75 LPL, ICBS 1851: letter to Provist [sic] and Fellows of Oriel College, newspaper clipping, 1831–1833.

76 A.J.B. Beresford Hope, *Worship in the Church of England*, 2nd edn (London: John Murray, 1875), pp. 10–12.

77 Thomas Mozley, *Reminiscences: Chiefly of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement*, 2nd edn, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1882), p. 345; the final cost rose from £660 to £1,010/9s/6d: see Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860.

that made it an especially useful model for churches built abroad where finance might be very limited.[78] As *The Ecclesiologist* noted in 1842:

> It is commonly supposed that a building, to be churchlike and in correct taste, must be necessarily more expensive than one which is the contrary. There cannot be a greater mistake. The most church-like of modern churches, Littlemore, near Oxford, was also one that cost as little as any, the total expense not amounting to £1000.[79]

Secondly, the appreciated aesthetic of the building was seen as merited by its overall unity of statement and purpose, which in turn made its meaning intelligible. As Newman iterated only a few years later:

> Our architecture at the present day is a type, or rather an effect, of our state of mind. The lines of our buildings do not flow on, nor their arms expand, and return into themselves, as being the expansion of one whole idea, but we seem to be ever congratulating ourselves that we have got so far, and to be asking "What shall we do next?"—range rising above range, and pile placed aside of pile, without even the merit of being excrescences. And we make up for want of meaning in the whole by stress and earnestness in the parts; we lavish decorations on bit by bit, till what was at first unmeaning, ends by being self-contradictory.[80]

Gothic developments

Another source of influence over church design at a national level was the Cambridge Camden (later Ecclesiological) Society, established in 1839, that, like Pugin, maintained a strong absolutist position on matters of ecclesiology, which was frequently described as a scientific enterprise. As noted in the first volume of their journal, 'if in any thing [sic] we seem to speak harshly, [it is] to the necessity which

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78 G.A. Bremner, 'Littlemore Church', *Victorian Review,* 39/1 (2013), pp. 19–20.
79 'New Churches', *The Ecclesiologist,* 1/1 (1841), p. 10.
80 John Henry Newman, 'VIII: The Anglo-American Church', *British Critic* (1839), p. 308.

obliges us, as a Church Society, to judge of things absolutely, not relatively'.[81] Their journal and publications were hugely influential. An 1850 article on urban church design by Oxford's new diocesan architect G.E. Street[82] set forth the ideals of high Victorian architecture that would dominate ecclesiological design for the rest of the century.[83]

Less important historically but of considerable influence locally was the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture (later Oxford Architectural Society), also established in 1839. Its initial purpose was to cultivate 'correct Architectural Taste' among the Clergy, in light of the many new Church buildings being erected.[84] From the outset the society benefited from the strong support of a large number of University members, and quickly became a resource for Clergy, who wrote to them for guidance on restoring or building churches in a 'correct' gothic style.[85] These requests became numerous enough for the society to start publishing drawings of churches with plans and elevations that could be used as exemplars: these included SS Mary and Nicholas Littlemore and St Giles Oxford.[86]

By the middle of the century the necessary 'mental elements' of the gothic style were being identified by critics such as Ruskin as the capacity to express religious

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81 'New Churches', *The Ecclesiologist,* 1/4 (1842), p. 52.

82 G.E. Street, 'On the Proper Characteristics of a Town Church', *The Ecclesiologist,* 11 (1850), pp. 227–33.

83 Michael Hall, *George Frederick Bodley and the later Gothic revival in Britain and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 185.

84 *The Rules and Proceedings of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture* (1839), [p. 2].

85 David Prout, '"The Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture', and 'The Oxford Architectural Society', 1839–1860', *Oxoniensia,* 54 (1989), pp. 380–81.

86 Henry Jones Underwood, *Views and Details of Littlemore Church near Oxford* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1840); and James Park Harrison, *Views and Details of Saint Giles' Church, Oxford* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842).

principles through an inherent noble 'savageness', a quality made possible only in work executed by skilled craftsmen given a degree of creative freedom and not required mechanically to follow strict instructions ('changefulness').[87] The hunt for an unadulterated gothic style was being challenged and modified by a group of ambitious architects developing a more eclectic gothic that they felt better reflected a time of progress and rising modernity. Scholarly interest in medieval gothic continued, but visits to the continent by Ruskin and others provided fresh inspiration drawn from a wider range of medieval precedents. Under the direction of a suitably informed architect, these styles could be modified and juxtaposed to create new statements of gothic altogether that, for some architects, required eliding Reformation influences and treating their work as the true continuation of medieval gothic.[88] Besides this, for urban churches especially, limitations of funding encouraged architects to design plainer buildings with less expensive ornament or decoration.

The result was a primitivist aesthetic, an architecture of the sublime that utilized sheer surfaces, undivided internal spaces, and height.[89] Churches reflected the quantity, strength, and weight of their materials, projecting a statement of mass and solidity that some described as 'muscular'. The simplest exponent of this in Oxford is the underrated 1874 St Peter-le-Bailey, an early work of Basil Champneys that is now the chapel for St Peter's College.[90] A more widely appreciated example is Street's

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87 John Ruskin and William Morris, *The Nature of Gothic: a Chapter from The Stones of Venice* (London: George Allen, 1900), esp. paragraphs 1–40.

88 Neil Jackson, 'The Un-Englishness of G.E. Street's Church of St James-the-Less', *Architectural History,* 23 (1980), p. 86.

89 Hall, *George Frederick Bodley*, p. 185.

90 Pevsner described it as 'of little interest'; Sherwood and Pevsner, *Oxfordshire*, p. 248.

1862 SS Philip and James, which borrowed from Italianate 'Lombardic' influences,[91] and where non-structural projections such as plinths and bases were sheared away, ornament was almost entirely limited to constructional polychromy, and windows were uniformly filled with plate tracery. The result is a stone mass that sits solidly within its urban environment but is at the same time moulded and shaped into a distinctly ecclesiastical form.[92] Visits to Italy had also fuelled an interest in Byzantine styles, and, at the encouragement of its sole patron Thomas Coombe, St Barnabas (Blomfield, 1868) became the first church in England to follow the style of a basilica, although interior decorations were executed following a more gothic style.[93]

T.G. Jackson was one of the most important leaders of the architectural profession in the nineteenth century and played a pivotal role in the arts and crafts movement.[94] He was a significant influence at Oxford following the completion of the University's New Examination Schools in 1876 and critiqued the previous few decades for following the gothic revival style 'with a blind, unreflecting worship'.[95] Within Oxford's parish churches, however, Jackson's contribution was entirely restorative, with his work on St Mary Oxford the most important, and, at the time, the most controversial.[96] In general, religious arts and crafts builders gravitated more

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91 On Street's Italianate work see George Edmund Street, *Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages: Notes of Tours in the North of Italy*, 2nd edn (London: J. Murray, 1878), pp. 361–408 [1st edn 1855].

92 C.M. Smart, *Muscular Churches: Ecclesiastical Architecture of the High Victorian Period* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1989), pp. 97–101; for more on the local controversy of Street's design see Lancaster, 'Church of England Ritualism', pp. 38–40.

93 Sladen, 'Byzantium in the Chancel: Surface Decoration and the Church Interior', p. 86.

94 William Whyte, *Oxford Jackson: Architecture, Education, Status, and Style, 1835–1924* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 53.

95 T.G. Jackson, *Modern Gothic Architecture* (London: Henry S. King, 1873), p. 193.

96 Whyte, *Oxford Jackson*, p. 74.

naturally to spaces that were small scale and intimate,[97] and nineteenth-century examples in Oxford are limited to two college chapels, both nonconformist: Unitarian Manchester college chapel (Thomas Worthington, 1891–93) and Congregational Mansfield college chapel (Basil Champneys, 1886–89).[98]

Alongside Jackson, the other main architect at Oxford in the final quarter of the nineteenth century was G.F. Bodley, whose contribution to the city and beyond was acknowledged in 1907 at Encaenia with an honorary degree.[99] Following his death the obituary in the *Oxford Times* recorded that Bodley was 'our leading ecclesiastical architect', noting that while G.G. Scott's churches 'were an exact imitation of the old patterns, Bodley's bore throughout the impress of an original mind'.[100] Despite sharing with Jackson a deep respect for Ruskin's teaching, and despite working throughout his career with artists such as Morris and Kempe, Bodley's approach to design, which he regarded as needing to be entirely controlled by the architect, was from the 1860s the antithesis of the arts and crafts movement.[101] Bodley's 1896 church in Cowley St John is a most impressive new nineteenth-century parochial church building, and followed a pattern Bodley had refined over the previous three decades (Image 4-4, p. 244).[102] The church was for a parish congregation but was

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97 Alec Hamilton, *Arts and Crafts Churches* (London: Lund Humphries, 2020), p. 26
98 *ibid.*, pp. 74–75.
99 'Incidents at the Encaenia, Mark Twain', *OT* (29 June 1907), p. 7.
100 'Death of Mr G.F. Bodley', *OT* (26 October 1907), p. 9.
101 Michael Hall, 'Bodley, George Frederick', in *Oxford DNB* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [online edn, Jan 2016; accessed 8 July 2021]; on Ruskin's influence on Jackson see Whyte, *Oxford Jackson,* p. 18 and passim.
102 Henry Taunt, Cowley St John St John the Evangelist, west end, 1903: record CC50/00537, https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/.

Image 4-4 Henry Taunt, St John the Evangelist, west end, 1903



also built as a conventual church for the brothers of the Society of St John the Evangelist. Bodley's intent was to create a church with a 'severity, simplicity, and unity of design' and a lofty interior lit by tall clerestory windows with 'severe looking

tracery'.[103] Without a door, the church's west end is particularly striking: Hall considers it one of Bodley's most satisfying compositions.[104] Overall the result is a masterclass in the degree to which the muscular high gothic can be pared back while still retaining its core aesthetics of the sublime, with its 'massive walls of white clear-cut stones'.[105]

Institutional chapels

Institutional chapels are mentioned in the visitation returns only rarely, but their presence within the city contributed still further to the city's overall religiosity and Anglican identity. It is clear that many of these institutional chapels were well attended and frequently used by the clergy discussed in chapter three. Mention is made in passing to the Bullingdon Barracks Chapel (built 1877; also called Oxford Military Chapel), where the minister for St James Cowley was chaplain and preached a weekly sermon.[106] St Sepulchre Chapel (Underwood, built 1847) was in a graveyard in Jericho, and used by the curate at St Paul to conduct special services for children. These included boys from the local school as well as children of workers from the University Printing Press, and the services included a shortened form of Morning Prayer, with hymns and a plain address.[107]

Uniquely, despite not being a parish church, the chapel for the asylum in Littlemore (Clark, 1846) submitted in 1854 its own visitation return; most inmates and staff

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103 Bodley, 'New Church'.
104 Hall, *George Frederick Bodley*, p. 378.
105 'The Foundation of the New Church', *Cowley Evangelist* (1894), p. 94.
106 VRs 1887–90, 1896, St James Cowley.
107 King, *Addington Venables*, pp. 12–13.

there attended a Sunday service, and it seated about 200 people.[108] Other institutional chapels that ran weekly, well-attended services but were not mentioned in the returns include the plain chapel at the House of Industry (Gwynn, 1773)[109] relocated with a new chapel in 1861 to Cowley (Fisher, 1861);[110] the 1798 chapel for Oxford's county jail;[111] the chapel for the 1826 Oxford Lunatic Asylum in Headington (Underwood, 1841–51);[112] the chapel built 1860 for a penitentiary for fallen women[113] ran by the Clewer Sisters; [114] the well-appointed St Luke Radcliffe Infirmary Chapel (Blomfield, 1865); and the school chapel at St Edwards (Wilkinson, 1877) that was a 'prominent feature in the landscape'.[115] Also not mentioned in any of the returns for Cowley St John was the St John the Evangelist mission on Marston Road where a small and ascetic Founder's Chapel[116] by Anglo-Catholic architect C.C. Rolfe was added to the Cowley Fathers' religious complex in 1887.[117]

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108 VR 1854, Littlemore Asylum.

109 An 1859 auction catalogue describes the chapel as sparsely adorned: 10 deal benches, a desk with some stools, a box of books, and several 'cocoa-nut cushions'; see *Oxford Workhouse: Catalogue of the Furniture* (Oxford: Oxford Chronicle Company, 1859), items 45–46, p. 6.

110 The chapel was built outside its main complex to allow easy public access; and is the only part of the workhouse that remains today.

111 *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 4, p. 300; Tyack, *Oxford*, p. 202.

112 From 1843 called Warneford Hospital; although open 'to every rank in society' the lowest weekly rate was a considerable 12s; see 'Oxford Lunatic Asylum', *JOJ* (11 November 1826), p. 3.

113 Women identified as prostitutes (sometimes described by the adjective 'unfortunate') could in fact refer to female thieves, tramps, alcoholics, and those seen as 'feeble-minded'; see Susan Mumm, '"Not Worse than Other Girls": the Convent-Based Rehabilitation of Fallen Women in Victorian Britain', *Journal of Social History,* 29/3 (1996), p. 527; and Jane Pearson and Maria Rayner, *Prostitution in Victorian Colchester: Controlling the Uncontrollable* (Hatfield: Essex Publications, 2018), p. 33.

114 Valerie Bonham, *A Joyous Service: the Clewer Sisters and their Work*, new edn (Cuddesdon, Oxford: CSJB Books, 2012), p. 31.

115 'Consecration of the Chapel and Burying Ground at St Edward's School', *JOJ* (9 June 1877), p. 5; and 'Alterations and Improvements in Oxford', *JOJ* (13 October 1877), p. 6.

116 Sometimes called the 'Chapel of the House'; see for example 'The New Church', p. 34.

117 Hamilton, *Arts and Crafts Churches*, p. 77.

The most prevalent type of institutional chapel in Oxford, however, was the college chapel. University chapels were peculiars and so not included in visitations, but were also a part of Oxford's urban religious life. There is to date no study enumerating seating capacity for each chapel and examining the role of the college chapel in nineteenth-century University and city life. Some colleges invested far more money than others in salaries and maintenance related to their chapels. If the average annual chapel expenditures 1867–71 is compared, for example, each year New College spent £1,997,[118] Magdalen £1,694, and Christ Church £2,679, while other colleges spent far less: Trinity £46, Wadham £65, and Oriel £8.[119] At the start of the nineteenth century there were 22 University colleges or residential halls in Oxford with a chapel, and Christ Church housed the substantial Oxford Cathedral. The cathedral was singled out by the vicar of St Mary Oxford, Edmund ffoulkes, as stealing away his congregation for 'cathedral services where there is no offertory or collection.'[120] Two new halls — Wycliffe Hall and St Stephen's House — were established in 1876, each with a chapel. The substantial chapel for the new college of Keble (Butterfield, 1876) was designed such that its magnificence would 'not be surpassed by anything of its kind in Europe'.[121]

Throughout the century it was observed in visitation returns that 'many' parishioners, especially those with a University connection of some sort, attended

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118 These costs included £325 for the chaplain, £629 for lay clerks, and £200 for the organist.

119 *Report of the Commissioners ... Property and Income of the Universities of Oxford*, pp. 337, 88, 102, 823, 307; Oriel noted it had in the recent past spent over £1,000 on repairs at St Mary Oxford; Christ Church's chapel was also Oxford's cathedral.

120 VR 1890, St Mary Oxford; ffloulkes was concerned that the church's low collection figures could not support expenses such as the church choir.

121 'Laying the Foundation Stone of Keble College Chapel', *JOJ* (3 May 1873), p. 6.

Sunday service at a college chapel in lieu of a parish church.[122] Indeed, the minister at St Peter in the East considered college chapels to be, from a parishioner's point of view, acting as chapels of ease, noting in 1878 that New College and Magdalen College chapels provided daily services attended by the public.[123] Christ Church Cathedral was open to students from all colleges, and in term time undergraduates attended 'in vast numbers'.[124]

Mission churches and halls

When assessing Anglican parochial activity in the nineteenth century — and especially attendees at a Church service — the role and prevalence of mission halls, mission rooms, and other (mostly) non-consecrated spaces is often overlooked. This is because these places left behind a much lighter paper trail of evidence, with details of when a building might close down or be repurposed particularly scarce. As such it is difficult to perform any systematic review, especially when covering a large number of parishes and dates.

Under the direction of Lord Shaftesbury, the 1855 Places of Worship Registration Act made it legal for religious services of more than 20 people to be held in places other than a Church or licensed dissenting chapel.[125] It is clear the clergy in this review applied themselves diligently to take advantage of this change. Statistical returns from the 1892 census on parochial work, coordinated with the convocations of

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122 VR 1808, St Mary Oxford; VR 1887, St Mary Magdalen.
123 VR 1878, St Peter in the East.
124 Ince, 'Church and Universities', p. 329.
125 *Places of Worship Registration Act 1855*, c. 81, Vic. 18/19 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/18-19/81; see also G.S.R. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 187.

Canterbury and York, enumerated 780 places licensed for services in the Oxford diocese, of which at least 129 (just over one in six) were chapels or mission halls.[126] But even this large number undercounts, probably by a substantial degree, the many other places built or appropriated by the parochial church to reach parishioners. In these returns other spaces used included the parsonage or some other place of residence, an abandoned hut, and a barn. 18 other buildings apart from a church are specifically listed in the returns as a location where Anglican services were held, although it is clear that many other services, or meetings very much like a service, were being held elsewhere.

The pre-existing building type adapted more than any other for home mission was a local Church school. Alongside mission halls, a local school building could also be requisitioned for separate Sunday services. From the 1830s to 1860s Oxford ministers helped promote a city-wide push for more parish schools, with much support from Bishop Wilberforce from 1845 on.[127] Much of this activity may have been spurred by concern over a proliferation of nonconformist churches. Whyte has noted that in the nineteenth century schools were 'a battleground for the souls of England's children', and, in the Clergy's eyes, were perhaps of greater importance than church restoration projects or parsonages in consolidating Church of England

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126 This figure excluded chapels attached to institutions, and unlicensed buildings and rooms. For a summary of the census see *ODC,* 1894, p. 206.

127 Henry Hughes, *Rise and Growth of Parochial Schools in Oxford* (Oxford: pub. unknown, 1868), p. 7.

influence.[128] In the 1851 education census, in the city of Oxford alone 81 day-schools were listed, of which 23 were public, and 50 were private.[129]

Within the visitation returns are 1,242 notes on the education of (mostly young) parishioners. A survey of Oxford school buildings and their use is beyond the scope of this study, except to note that the work took up much time and energy for the clergy in this review. As with mission halls, school buildings were useful for other parochial work alongside church services. At the St Clement school room, for example, the St Clement rector held what he called 'our school-room service' in the evening for eight months of the year and a day service for the remaining four months: on average 300 attended each week.[130] In 1861, the room was also used, in the same week, for a reading of Dickens's *A Cricket on the Hearth*, a Temperance meeting opened and closed with prayer by the late incumbent E.A. Litton and a talk organized by the Oxford Sanitary Association on 'Health Homes'.[131]

The liminal purpose of these spaces blurred the boundary between what constituted the sacred and the profane, such that the religious activity that took place within is often difficult to categorize and count alongside services held in churches and chapels of ease that were required to adhere to the Book of Common Prayer. The positioning of these spaces as denominationally neutral zones helped establish a friendly and welcoming air that was strategically recognized by the Clergy as a quality that could

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128 William Whyte, *Unlocking the Church*, p. 113.
129 *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 4, p. 442.
130 VR 1860, St Clement.
131 'Teetotal Lecture / Temperance Meeting / Readings', *OC* (23 February 1861), p. 5.

attract people unfamiliar with or averse to Church culture.[132] Perhaps the most targeted parishioners for these settings were the poor, who in Holywell Bishop Wilberforce described as having 'a simple spirit of religion in an undefined way'.[133] It was noted, for example, that moving a Thursday evening service from the church in St Ebbe to the nearby schoolroom resulted in much higher attendances.[134] These non-consecrated and informal spaces were an important Anglican response to dissenting religious competition. A bible class that started and ended with prayer that borrowed text from the Anglican liturgy, a short message from a clergyman, and one or two hymns, might to the people attending have been considered a church service, irrespective of what the Church might think or how it calculated church attendees.

Any thorough examination of Anglican church attendance figures (see chapter five, *Church attendance*, p. 363) needs to acknowledge the efficacy of the Church's home mission work and the role these low-status places played in connecting the Church with its mostly poorer parishioners. With few exceptions, most of the buildings used for this purpose were new, cheaper structures that at the time carried no historical significance or architectural status. These worship places were accepted as a necessary compromise on an ideal Church aesthetic, and were used with a hope that a more traditional church could be built later. When the congregation of the temporary Iron Church was preparing to move to a new stone building around the corner, for example, it was noted that:

> Those who have so long and faithfully attended that Church need a more substantial home for their worship, and one which in its permanence and dignity shall be suitable

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132 S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 265.
133 Wilberforce, *Diocese Books of Wilberforce*, pp. 243–44.
134 VR 1860, St Ebbe.

> for the service of Almighty God. The Iron Church … must in the nature of things soon be removed, and a new church must rise.[135]

The notion that because nonconformists could meet practically anywhere it was easier for them to establish a new presence in a village or neighbourhood than for the Church is widely accepted. Within the Church of England creating a new district or parish was a convoluted legal process that took time and money. But mission rooms or mission halls became the Church's response to this disparity, and afforded Clergy the opportunity to establish an Anglican presence within a community in a similar way to dissenters. It was 'the only means of ministering to the … people in the way that Nonconformity does', and money saved from erecting a costly church building could free up funds for more curates.[136]

Almost without exception, mission rooms were for the working class. A rare counterexample was the appropriation of an unlicensed barn in Cowley for Sunday services in the early 1870s that was availed of by nearly the entire congregation of St James Cowley following unresolved disagreements with their belligerent incumbent James Coley.[137] Primarily, however, mission rooms were to accommodate poorer parishioners who, from lack of seating or some other reason, did not attend the parish church proper. When the new church of SS Mary and John was added in Cowley St John, Benson noted that the congregation at the Iron Church was 'scarcely affected', because the two places of worship attracted such different sections of the parish.[138] In parishes where 'the humbler classes are to a great extent excluded' by

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135 'The New Church', p. 34.
136 Wilfred S. de Winton, 'The Increase of the Episcopate', *CC* (1893), p. 50.
137 'The Cowley Schism', *OT* (27 September 1873).
138 VR 1884, Cowley St John Iron Church.

sittings being allotted to the 'well-to-do' parishioners, a mission room was seen as a best first step towards providing a more accessible venue.[139]

Within these non-consecrated spaces Anglican ministers had flexibility in presenting religious and religious-related material. The Book of Common Prayer remained for most the single source used, but passages could be shortened, reordered, and interpolated with texts from other sources. Mission halls could provide services that 'people can understand and grasp', led by someone who 'could preach extempore and speak from his heart to the people, so that the people could understand'.[140] Ministers observed that services for poorer parishioners benefited from popular novelties that would help attract numbers.[141] Lantern services, for example, were by the end of the century considered by the Church an effective way to reach out to the urban poor,[142] and by the 1860s were frequently advertised to Clergy in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*. While Bishop Stubbs strongly disapproved of their use within a church building, he conceded that in a mission room they could be used to great effect.[143]

The inclusion of mission churches and halls in visitation returns is irregular and inconsistent. Among the 3,867 listed services within the visitation returns in this review, only a handful are described as taking place in one of these alternative

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139 Richard Foster, 'The Use of Mission Rooms and Lay Co-operation', *CC* (1889), p. 44 [Member of the House of Laymen, Canterbury].

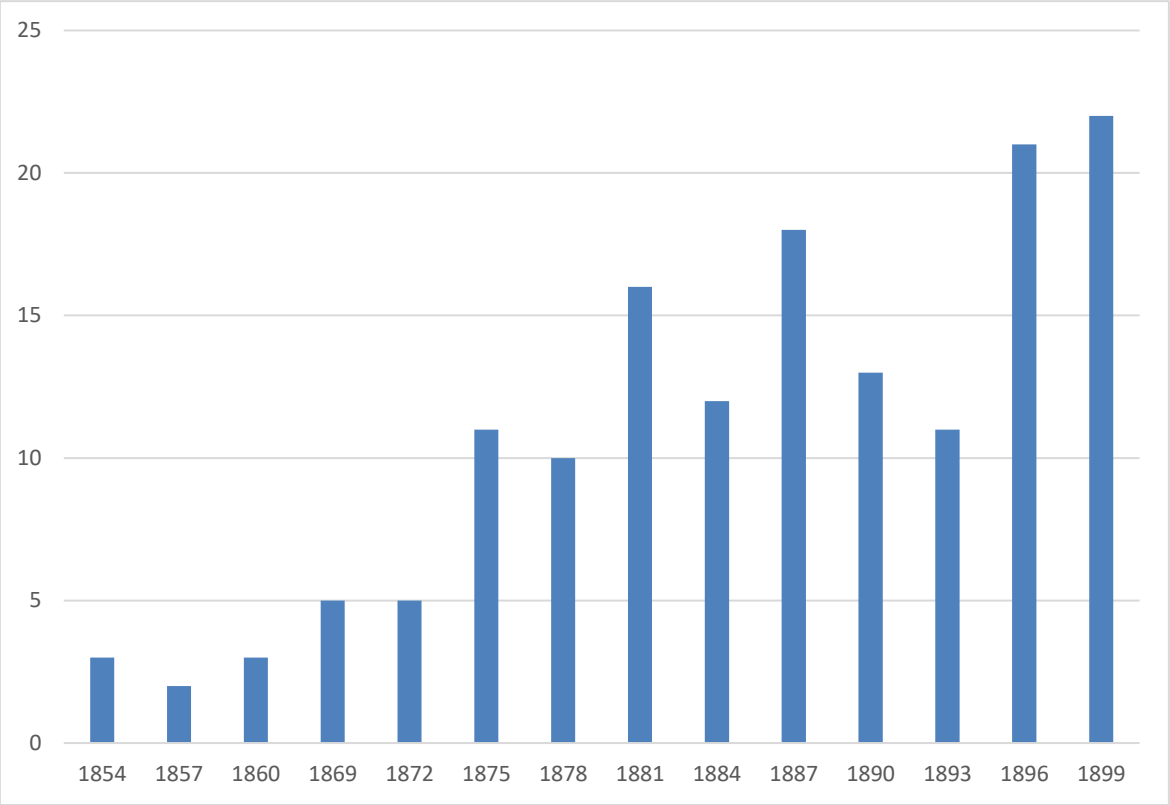
140 H.A. Colvile, 'Home Missions', *CC* (1893), p. 294.

141 VR 1857, St Ebbe.

142 Karen Eifler, 'Between Attraction and Instruction: Lantern Shows in British Poor Relief', *Early Popular Visual Culture,* 8/4 (2010), p. 364.

143 Stubbs described them as Lantern Exhibitions; see Stubbs, 'Fourth Visitation Charge ... 1899', p. 316. Early in the next century Bishop Gore condoned their use in Church, but only during Lent and never on a Sunday, see 'Lantern Services in Church', *The Observer* (4 January 1914), p. 10.

Graph 4-1 Weekly evening religious services/meetings/classes in non-consecrated spaces



spaces, but records of mid-week evening meetings steadily increase over the second half of the century (Graph 4-1).

What scant evidence we have suggests that these spaces were regularly well attended, such that by the 1890s the total number of people attending a weekly Anglican service or meeting, including weekday services and religious meetings, was greater than those who attended a Sunday service in a consecrated place of worship only. At St Ebbe two such weeknight services were provided in non-consecrated buildings for the poor[144] and in Marston in 1890 a new mission hall was being attended by an average of 90 people each Sunday.[145] A new mission church in

144 VR 1869, St Ebbe.
145 VR 1890, St Nicholas Marston.

Cowley St John, dedicated to St Alban-the-Martyr, was opened 1889, with seating for 120 people. It provided an early Sunday communion service at 7:30, evensong with sermon on Sundays at 19:00, and bible classes and a midweek service with sermon.[146] At St Aldate two weekly religious meetings for women were held in the rectory room: on Sunday it drew in 24 women, but on Monday evening it attracted a much larger group of 190 women.[147]

In 1870 funds were raised to erect a plain brick and tile mission hall in New Headington to service its poorest residents. Noted as being unpretentious yet with 'a decidedly ecclesiastical character',[148] it is first mentioned in Headington visitation returns in 1872, noting it was small with 'temporary sittings', probably chairs, and then mentioned again from 1890 to 1899. It was 50 feet long and 20 feet wide, and had a Sunday morning and evening service, with monthly communion.[149]

The purchase by the Simeon Trust and Oxford Evangelical Trust of advowsons in 1860 and 1864 (discussed p. 141) greatly consolidated an Anglican evangelical position and influence at Oxford for the remainder of the century. Without this strategic move their influence would have been much less. In 1869 in the garden of the St Aldate Rectory a large mission room that could seat 300 people was built,[150] primarily to provide a place for 'many who would not have been induced to come to Church by ordinary means'.[151] It was used for regular Sunday and mid-week services

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146 VR 1890, Cowley St John; see also *Cowley S. John Parish Magazine* (January 1890); *ibid.*; *ODC,* 1890, p. 174.
147 VR 1893, St Aldate.
148 'Church at New Headington', *OC* (22 October 1870), p. 2.
149 VRs 1872, 1890–99, Headington.
150 'St Aldate's Meeting Room', *OC* (16 October 1869), p. 8.
151 VR 1884, St Aldate.

for the rest of the century, as well as bible classes, University ministrations, and annual gatherings of evangelical societies.[152]

From 1883 up to the end of the century the space was used, sometimes daily, for missions led by the Church Army.[153] Established in Westminster in 1882, from 1883 the Church Army's main base for the next three years was at St Aldate, where they established their first training school.[154] The movement had the strong endorsement of Christopher, and Bishop Mackarness was a patron from the beginning.[155] Much of its style and method was based on the work of the Salvation Army (discussed below),[156] with open-air preaching, short services that included testimonies and music, and the inclusion of women in its work and preaching.[157] Their evangelising included marches and processions such that 'the whole parish was turned upside down'.[158] This was a religious street culture that, it was noted, 'many may dislike', but nevertheless 'a universal consensus of opinion as to the good done' prevailed. From at least 1889 another Church Army officer, listed as a lay helper, was working in the St Ebbe parish with a focus on the Holy Trinity chapel of ease.[159]

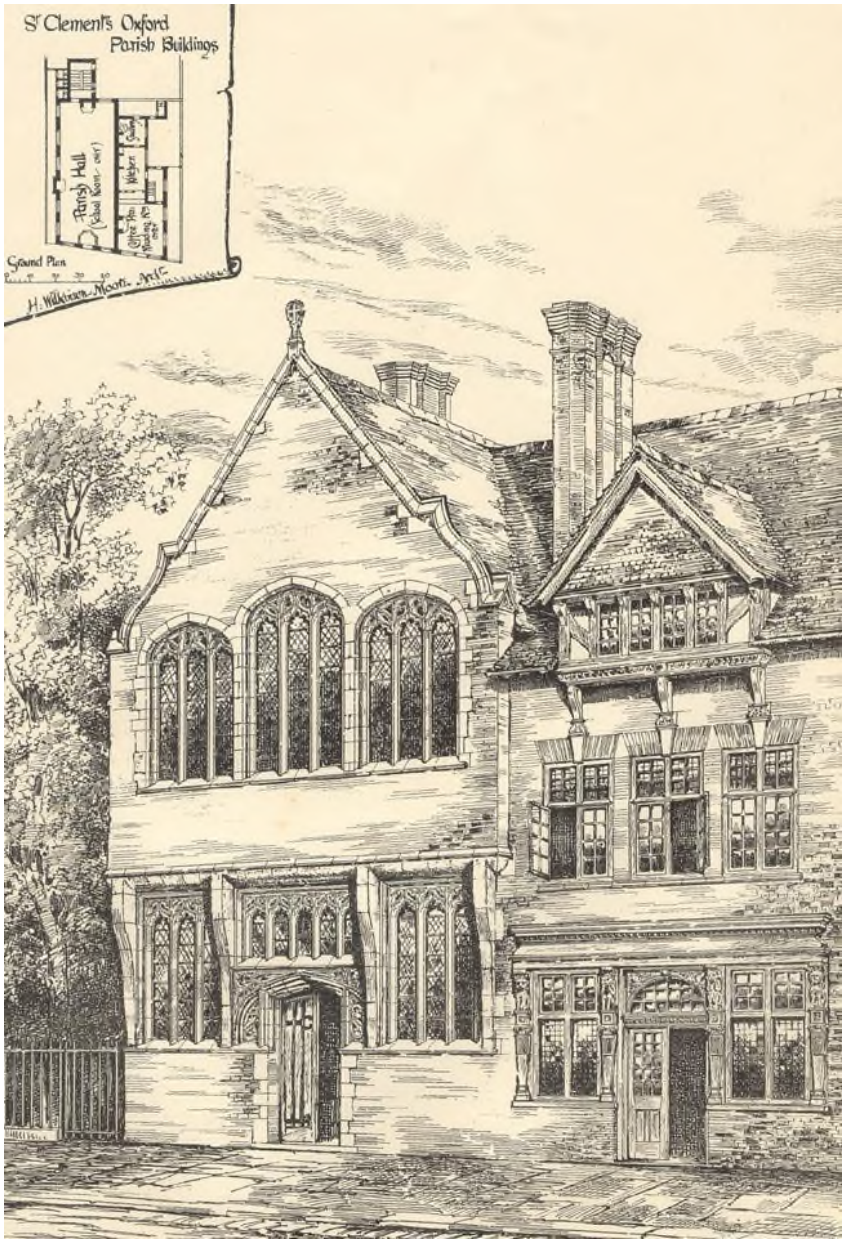
The substantial St Clement parish building with mission hall, built 1887–91 in the Queen Anne style using brick dressed with stone (Image 4-5[160]), is also missing from

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152 Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 161.
153 VRs 1887, 1899, St Aldate.
154 VR 1884, St Aldate.
155 'The Bishop of Oxford and the Church Army', *OT* (17 May 1884), p. 8.
156 John Oakly, 'Evangelising Agencies Supplementary to the Parochial System', *CC* (1885), p. 210 [Dean of Manchester].
157 A.E. Reffold, *The Audacity to Live: a Résumé of the Life and Work of Wilson Carlile* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1938), p. 38 and passim.
158 Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 230, citing the anonymous *The Early Days of the Church Army* (1891), p. 26.
159 VR 1889, St Ebbe Holy Trinity; VRs 1889, 1896, St Ebbe.
160 *Building News* (27 May 1887).

the visitation returns.[161] Situated on the main road into Oxford city, it was a high-status building and many other such mission rooms being built around the country followed a similar architectural pattern.[162]

Image 4-5 Parish building with mission hall, St Clement, 1887



161 *Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire* (London: Kelly and Co., 1895).

162 Compare, for example, the building in St Clement with the mission hall in Clerkenwell, illustrated in *Building News* (31 January 1890), p. 159.

Buildings not mentioned at all in the visitation returns range from the significant to the insubstantial. A mission room opened in Cowley St John on Dover's Row was led by Brother Gardner and offered a children's service and an evening service with sermon every Sunday, with a second evening service at 20:00 on Thursdays.[163]

As previously stated, mission halls were often a precursor to fundraising for a more substantial church or chapel of ease: examples in this review include St Frideswide (church 1872; preceded by a school-chapel on Bridge Street[164]), and St Margaret north Oxford (church from 1883; preceded by a meeting place in Heyfield's Hutt, possibly one of several dilapidated cottages).[165] The two chapels in use for the longest period, however, were the Iron Church (37 years: 1859–96) and the Boatman's Chapel (27 years: 1839–66); both were ultimately replaced with more permanent buildings: the substantial St John the Evangelist in St John Cowley (Bodley, 1894–96), and the far more modest St Nicholas in Frideswide, which cost £380.[166] Both were consecrated and could host communion, and their longevity resulted in sufficient records that make it possible to explore them in more detail.

Boatman's Chapel

In June 1839 an entirely different sort of church appeared in Oxford: the Boatman's Chapel. Moored on Castle Mill Stream opposite Fisher Row, it was to remain a fixture there for the next 27 years. The Boatman's Chapel is referenced only once in the

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163 Richard Meux Benson, *Letters of Richard Meux Benson*, ed. George Congreve and W.H. Longridge (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1916), p. 102.

164 'New Osney Chapel', *OUH* (25 November 1854), p. 11; 'A Church for New Osney', *OT* (17 December 1870), p. 2.

165 Hinchcliffe, *North Oxford*, p. 83.

166 'The Floating Chapel School', *OT* (30 January 1869), p. 5.

visitation returns, noting that a service was held there every Sunday, alternating between 11:00 and 15:00.[167] This single mention, however, reveals the ingenuity of the local Church in translating their religious message into a format more easily received by inhabitants of their parish. It also exemplifies the inventiveness that can arise when the Church allows lay activism to help direct and guide home mission work.

The idea of converting a ship or boat into a church catering specifically for the maritime community had circulated for at least 20 years. In 1818 two floating chapels — one in Wapping, London, and another in Bristol — had been established.[168] The Bristol chapel, called the Ark, was for merchant seamen, and the chapel in London primarily for sailors from the Navy. It seems the experiment was considered successful: in 1821 another was established in Hull,[169] and in 1823 a 'large and commodious vessel' was converted into a chapel and moored in Liverpool, offering divine service for almost 1,000 people who attended.[170] Indeed, a floating chapel in Edinburgh proved so effective in providing assistance of a 'most beneficial and practical kind' that it was enlarged by 1825.[171] Later that same year the Episcopal Floating Church Society was established in London, with the London mayor as chair.[172] The society attracted a number of the aristocracy into its membership,

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167 VR 1869, St Thomas; another record of the Floating Chapel is in Wilberforce's 1860 returns, Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860.

168 *Bury and Norwich Post* (20 May 1818); see also 'A Case Interesting to Humanity', *Morning Chronicle (London)* (25 November 1820).

169 *JOJ* (28 April 1821), p. 2.

170 'The Liverpool Seamen's Friend Society', *Liverpool Mercury* (7 March 1823).

171 'Edinburgh and Leith Seaman's Friend Society', *Caledonian Mercury* (19 May 1825).

172 'Episcopal Floating Church Society', *Morning Post (London)* (21 July 1825).

with the primary aim of helping establish 'a series of Floating Chapels in the Kingdom … as an effort to improve the condition of the lower classes.'[173] Floating chapels continued to be maintained or added around the coastal cities and were seen as part of a system that helped manage a segment of the labouring workforce considered particularly vulnerable to immoral behaviour once removed from the strict disciplinarian life at sea.[174]

In landlocked Oxford the concept of converting a ship into a chapel for canal workers was realized with the adaptation of a barge. This was the first such instance in England, and it was so successful that by the 1850s it had provided an 'impulse' for other towns to follow suit in caring for the welfare of their 'inland navigators'.[175]

The idea was the brainchild of local coal merchant Henry Ward.[176] In 1829 Ward had established the original wharf in Jericho, and its apparent financial success within the boat industry led him to establish a floating chapel. The children of the families in the canal trade had no school, and Ward's vision was that the chapel would function as a school on the other days of the week.[177] Rather than convert a pre-existing barge, it was purpose-built, funded entirely by Ward and designed by architect Derrick, who provided his services without charge. Annual subscriptions raised towards maintaining the chapel and school were adequate: evangelical Golightly provided a generous subscription of £5 a year (Tractarian Chamberlain was not appointed to the

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173 'Episcopal Floating Chapel', *Morning Chronicle (London)* (21 July 1825).
174 'On the Moral Condition of Seamen', *Caledonian Mercury* (12 January 1835).
175 'Floating Chapel', *JOJ* (8 June 1839).
176 The 1852 *Gardner's Directory* lists him as living in the parish of St Mary Magdalen, and the 1841 census records that he had two live-in servants.
177 Mark Davies and Catherine Robinson, *Our Canal in Oxford: Along the Towpath from Wolvercote to Jericho and the City* (Oxford: Towpath Press, 1999), pp. 27–28.

parish until 1842); and over 50 other individuals committed to £1 or more a year, making a total of over £70.[178] Various efforts were taken to raise funds, including selling knick-knacks such as the ivory memoire in Image 4-6. When the Tractarian Thomas Chamberlain was appointed to the parish in 1842 the chapel continued to be used in the same manner.

The *Oxford Chronicle* reported that it was fitted up as a Church and school room, was able to hold 120–40 people, and noted, rather baldly, that 'the design ... is characteristic of a religious edifice'.[179] The design choice was, in fact, extraordinary.

Image 4-6 Ivory aide memoire, circa 1840



[178] 'Floating Chapel', *JOJ* (8 June 1839).
[179] 'Floating Chapel', *OC* (8 June 1839), p. 1.

Image 4-7 Boatman's Chapel, date unknown



A photo of the barge (Image 4-7),[180] executed soon after it was consecrated reveals that the door and windows were in an isosceles trapezium shape, with heavy corners emphasising its sharp angularity. 70 feet long and 14 feet wide, the 'very pretty' chapel was built in what was recognized as an Egyptian style, with the exterior and interior 'very judiciously decorated with appropriate ornaments'. Atop the middle of

[180] Boatman's chapel, date unknown: http://www.oxfordcanalheritage.org/history/gallery.

the barge its highest point was described in the *JOJ* as a 'little cupola', but it was in fact more a small squat tower that gave a modest Islamic arabesque flourish to the overall scheme.[181] The layout of the interior provided all that was required for an Anglican service: a vestry was to one end of the barge and the larger middle room included a pulpit, reading desk, and clerk's seat, and seats with backs made from oak. In keeping with the Egyptian style, the fittings were painted to look as if carved from stone.

The overall result was a fascinating interplay of function and style. In 1857 it was described as being 'ugly enough … a genuine Noah's Ark in appearance; very much like those venerable delights of our infancy, but, fortunately, of a Quaker-like drab from end to end.'[182] The primary form that determined the key shape of the religious space was the barge. The structure was greatly damaged in the 1866 floods, and 'disappeared from its wonted place' entirely in 1869.[183]

Iron Church

The use of iron in ecclesiastical buildings was rare before 1800 but not unheard of: Wren had used wrought iron in many of the window frames in St Paul's Cathedral 1691–97, in order to let in more light.[184] The replacement of load-bearing stonework with iron started to be more widely implemented by the early nineteenth century, with three cast-iron churches built in Liverpool 1813–16 by John Cragg perhaps the most celebrated early examples. Later in the century architects such as Joseph

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181 'Floating Chapel', *JOJ* (8 June 1839).
182 'Architectural Progress in Oxford: Part II – The Churches – St Thomas's', p. 301.
183 'The Floating Chapel School', *OT* (30 January 1869), p. 5.
184 Ray Osborne, 'Cast Iron Windows in Anglican Churches in England, 1791–1840', *Construction History,* 24 (2009).

Paxton, Coventry Patmore, and Matthew Digby worked to develop an ecclesiastical style utilizing new iron and glass technology.[185] One of the century's greatest exemplars of this new construction technique was the Oxford University Natural History Museum (Benjamin Woodward, 1855–60). In the building's main display room a series of gothic arches were built from wrought iron instead of stone, providing a strikingly spacious and open atrium, although the experimental nature of the engineering required all the supports to be replaced with cast iron during the build, at considerable expense.[186]

The 1859 Iron Church in Cowley, however, represented a completely different type of building construction (Image 4-8 and Image 4-9[187]). The practice of milling prefabricated panels from wood and metal was initially developed as a cheap method for making railway stations. Once complete, the disassembled structure could be transported to wherever it was needed, including overseas. This method, often termed 'portable building',[188] reached a peak in the 1840s and 50s when railway stations, prefabricated houses, shops, and warehouses were being shipped all over the world.[189] Churches built in this manner were highly economical: the construction style meant local bylaws could be bypassed for easier approval, they could be erected in under six weeks, and the structure could if needed be relocated. In addition to

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185 Smart, *Muscular Churches*, p. 17.

186 Carla Yanni, *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science and the Architecture of Display*, pbk edn (Baltimore, Maryland: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), pp. 78–84.

187 Henry Taunt, Iron Church, exterior, 1896: record CC50/0049; and Iron Church, date unknown, record HT01309: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/.

188 Malcolm Higgs, 'The Exported Iron Buildings of Andrew Handyside and Co. of Derby', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* 29/2 (1970), p. 175.

189 Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (London: Trewin Copplestone, 1972), pp. 494, 527–28.

Image 4-8 Henry Taunt, Iron Church, exterior, 1896



Image 4-9 Henry Taunt, Iron Church, interior, 1896



concerns that the development of iron churches was establishing a two-tier system of worship determined by affluence and class, for some the greater grievance was the aesthetic, as for example at Leamington Spa:

> In his exceeding anxiety to provide additional Church accommodation for the inhabitants of Leamington, the Vicar erected one of those spacious but exceedingly uncomfortable structures, known as Iron Churches. First, it was situated at the lower end of Learn Terrace, but afterwards removed to Warwick Street, which it does not adorn.[190]

The ironwork in the Crystal Palace gave what was seen as a modern material enormous exposure, and its use in buildings was seen widely from this time. In Table 4-2 a simple measurement of their increase is evidenced by counting search results for 'iron church' in the online British Newspaper Archive.[191] In the last years of the 1850s reports of iron churches being built significantly multiplied and increased through to the 1870s and 1880s.

Table 4-2 Count of search results for 'Iron Church' in the British Newspaper Archive

Decade	Result total
1800–09	1
1810–19	17
1820–29	53
1830–39	28
1840–49	250
1850–59	959
1860–69	5,532
1870–79	10,509
1880–89	11,448
1890–99	6,632

190 'The Story of the Iron Church', *Leamington Spa Courier* (16 October 1869), p. 4.
191 See https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/ [subscription required].

The Iron Church at Cowley was always considered a temporary arrangement until funds were available for something more substantial. Money saved on construction, however, was invested in furnishing its interior to help evoke an ecclesiastical air: this included stained glass windows throughout and a raised altar furnished with ornamented candlesticks and cross. Benson noted that it was 'provided with all that is needful for devout worship',[192] although at its opening the *JOJ* reporter described it as 'unpretending', and its fittings 'very chaste'.[193] The entire project, including acquisition of land, cost £1,000 and was entirely funded by the parish's minister Benson.[194] Much of the poorer development in the parish had been in its northern corner alongside St Clement, a considerable distance from the parish's church St James.

It was here that Benson felt confident to introduce a highly ritualistic service, while retaining a more conservative service at St James. By 1867 the services were considered by a member of the Church Alliance to be the most 'decidedly Romish' of all the churches in Oxford, taking on practically all the ritualistic features of SS Philip and James, and St Thomas, as well as elevating the bread and wine for 'many seconds', and wearing highly colourful Eucharistic vestments.[195]

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192 VR 1872, Cowley St John.

193 'Opening of the New Iron Church in the Cowley Road, St Clements, Oxford', *JOJ* (22 October 1859).

194 *ODC,* 1860, p. 96.

195 'Romanising and Ritualistic Practices in the Diocese of Oxford [pt 2]', *Church Association Monthly Intelligencer,* 7 (1867), pp. 83–84.

Within the parishes under review, the next substantial use of iron in a church was at St Alban the Martyr, where an iron nave was added to the original chancel in 1912 by A.M. Mowbray, the architect for SS Mary and John.[196]

Religious pluralism

Roman Catholicism

In 1800 the Acts of Union were passed, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Coming into force in 1801 it challenged the relationship between Church and State: Roman Catholicism was the dominant religion in Ireland, but until 1829 Roman Catholic members were barred from sitting in parliament. The first three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed considerable growth in Roman Catholicism, with a significant increase in numbers in London from about 50,000 in 1814 to 250,000 in the late 1830s.[197] A new characteristic of English Roman Catholicism was that the main body of believers comprised working class immigrants from Ireland. Indeed, in an Oxford meeting primarily for undergraduates on evangelising Roman Catholics it was said that the single most useful skill to acquire was the Irish language.[198]

Following on from protests and division concerning the 1845 Maynooth Question — a complex of political issues centred on Parliament funding a Roman Catholic

196 *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 5, p. 92, n. 60.
197 Brian Carter, 'Catholic Charitable Endeavour in London, 1810–1840: Part II', *Recusant History,* 25/4 (2001), p. 664.
198 'English Church Missions to Roman Catholics', *OC* (25 November 1854), p. 4.

university[199] — the reestablishment in 1850 of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy within Britain triggered frenzied opposition to what was quickly labelled the 'Papal aggression'.[200] Wiseman was already known for a series of controversial Lenten sermons, delivered in English and published in 1836, which targeted Protestants and were considered by some to mark the beginning of active revival in English Catholicism.[201]

Robert Inglis, MP for Oxford University 1829–54, was a vociferous anti-Catholic and strong supporter of the anti-Catholic Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851, and described Roman Catholics in a parliamentary address as opponents to science and progress.[202] Central to anti-Catholic sentiment was concern about their secrecy. Scepticism of confession and its possible connection with sexual deviancy contributed to popular preconceptions upon which gothic culture and literature opportunistically drew.[203] The wearing of cassocks or Roman Catholic cloaks in public was seen as particularly alarming, given that a Royal Proclamation had warned that it violated a parliamentary act.[204] *The Times* adopted dehumanising language to describe people

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199 Within the Conservative party the issues were in part a dress-rehearsal for the Corn Law split the following year; see E.R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 23.

200 John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829–1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), chap. 6.

201 Dom Aidan Bellinger, 'Catholicism Renewed: Controversy and Reconstruction in the English Catholic Community, 1790–1850', in Nigel Yates, (ed.), *Bishop Burgess and his World: Culture, Religion and Society in Britain, Europe and North America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 126.

202 Norman, *Anti-Catholicism*, pp. 176–82.

203 Patrick R. O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 74–81.

204 John Henry Newman, 'The Proclamations against Roman Catholic Processions', *JOJ* (3 July 1852).

thus dressed as 'infesting' the streets:

> They generally hunt in couples. A more unpleasant sight cannot be encountered in the course of a morning's walk than a brace of these dirty creatures as they glide about amongst the people with downcast eyes and hasty step.[205]

As the birth-place of Tractarianism, the practice of Roman Catholicism occupies a curious place in the history of nineteenth-century Oxford. As will be seen below, the local Roman Catholic presence was mostly tenuous. The strong anti-Catholicism that percolated within Oxford was primarily directed to a party within the Church whose sympathies to pre-Reformation practices were seen as unpatriotic, and, at worse, fallen and evil. A special ferocity was reserved for when Roman Catholic spirituality was seen to manifest materially in ornament or ritual within an Anglican church or service.[206] Led by such churchmen as Golightly, who campaigned tirelessly with provocative letters and pamphlets,[207] and Peter Maurice, who wrote voluminously on Oxford popery,[208] it was a fear that over the century diminished but never entirely subsided. By the end of the century about 15% of Clergy were members of at least one ritualist society,[209] and the 1906 Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline proved to be a watershed moment from which the 'Great Church Crisis' largely dissipated.[210]

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205 'London: For Some Times Past', *The Times* (16 June 1852).
206 For a detailed analysis of this see Lancaster, 'Church of England Ritualism'.
207 For a detailed review see Andrew Atherstone, *Oxford's Protestant Spy: the Controversial Career of Charles Golightly* (Bletchley: Paternoster, 2007).
208 Starting with *Popery in Oxford* in 1836, Maurice published at least seven texts, some book-length, on the same topic by 1869.
209 Nigel Yates, *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830–1910* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 322.
210 Bethany Kilcrease, *The Great Church Crisis and the End of English Erastianism, 1898–1906* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 147.

Unfolding events concerning Wiseman's official elevation in 1850 as London's Roman Catholic archbishop were keenly felt in Oxford and rekindled anxiety in the local population, as reflected in local reporting at the time. In Oxfordshire 82% of officiating ministers added their names to a protest letter written by their bishop, noting that the Roman Catholic church had 'abolished our sees and parishes', treating them 'as an unchristian nation, or … rightful subjects of his usurped dominion'.[211] The University issued a similar statement at an unusually large Convocation, and many members travelled considerable distances to ensure that their support was counted.[212] For laymen a city-wide petition was compiled, with St Ebbe and St Clement making their churches available for people to come in and sign.[213]

But these measures did not adequately quell the outrage and many parish vestries memorialized Queen Victoria[214] as the realm's religious figurehead, including those of Headington,[215] St Peter-le-Bailey, [216] St Mary the Virgin,[217] and St Martin.[218] Vestry

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211 A copy of the protest letter is preserved in Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860, included under section 'Aldate Saint'; the letter was signed by 632 out of 768 eligible incumbents, curates, and other officiating ministers, see Samuel Wilberforce, *A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford, at his Second Visitation* (London: John Murray, 1851), p. 33, and Wilberforce mailed copies of the letter to every bishop in the Anglican Communion, p. 42.

212 'The Papal Aggression: the University Address to her Majesty', *JOJ* (30 November 1850); and 'The Papal Aggression: Presentation of the University Address to the Queen', *JOJ* (14 December 1850).

213 'The Papal Aggression: Lay addresses', *JOJ* (28 December 1850).

214 It is unclear how much Queen Victoria appreciated these in light of her personal messages of sympathy and support to Pope Pius IX during the short-lived establishment of the Roman Republic 1848–49; see J. Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See: a Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Burns and Oates, 1978), p. 129.

215 'The Anti-Popery Movement', *JOJ* (23 November 1850).

216 'Meeting in St Peter le Bailey Parish', *JOJ* (23 November 1850).

217 'St Mary the Virgin', *JOJ* (21 December 1850).

218 'The Papal Aggression', *JOJ* (23 November 1850).

meetings proved especially controversial at St Giles[219] and Holywell,[220] however, with some parishioners wanting the letter to include a denouncement of Tractarianism for its perceived promotion of Roman Catholicism. While seemingly uncontroversial at St Peter-le-Bailey,[26] at Holywell the minister withdrew his name from the memorial once the rewording, formulated by C.P. Golightly, included a condemnation of Tractarianism.[221] A meeting of diocesan clergy to express solidarity against the Pope[222] met with similar dispute, this time between clergy for and against Tractarianism, with Wilberforce chastising them all for being distracted from more important issues.[223]

Agitation against Catholicism mounted over the following years. In Oxford, celebrating the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot was reported to have been almost forgotten[224] but took on a revived character from 1850.[225] In a sermon preached on 5 November at St Mary Oxford, W. Farquhar Hook, a Christ Church fellow and Vicar of Leeds, proclaimed that Roman Catholics were the country's 'bitterest enemies'. In response, the *JOJ* reported that the sermon was 'the most caustic protest against the sayings and doings of those who, by the introduction of the practices alluded to by

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219 'St Giles', *JOJ* (21 December 1850).
220 'Holywell Parish', *JOJ* (25 Janaury 1851).
221 'The Papal Aggression: Parish Meetings in Oxford, Holywell', *JOJ* (21 December 1850).
222 'The Papal Aggression: Large Meeting of the Clergy of this Diocese', *JOJ* (23 November 1850).
223 'The Bishop of Oxford and the Late Protest From the Clergy of the Diocese', *JOJ* (8 February 1851).
224 'The Fifth of November', *OC* (9 November 1850), p. 4.
225 The liturgy for 5 November in the Book of Common prayer was formally removed by statute 1859.

the Preacher, have brought discredit on the Protestant Church, that has been delivered from the University pulpit'.[226]

It is perhaps unsurprising that Roman Catholics generally maintained a quiet and discreet existence in Oxford. It will be seen below that new dissenting chapels were strategically positioned to be prominently visible, and acted as bold expressions of religious belief and respectability in the parish. But the two Roman Catholic churches at Oxford differed, reflecting a religious community that wished to remain out of sight, a material manifestation of their 'social invisibility' that marked their position in the previous century.[227] The first Roman Catholic place of worship, St Ignatius (Image 4-10 and Image 4-11),[228] built following the Catholic Relief Act of 1791, was strategically located outside the city proper in adjoining St Clement, and was well-concealed in the priest's garden behind his house.[229] The house itself was described with some envy by the Anglican incumbent of the parish as 'quite excellent', but the chapel behind it was particularly modest and plain.[230] There were very few places of Roman Catholic worship in Oxfordshire — by 1851 only eight[231] — and the chapel in St Clement of St Ignatius drew Catholics from surrounding parishes, including

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226 'Anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot', *OUH* (9 November 1850); the *JOJ* did not approve the sermon, see 'Anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot', *JOJ* (9 November 1850).
227 Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans*, p. 148.
228 Henry Taunt, St Ignatius Roman Catholic Chapel, 1906: records CC50/00509 and CC50/00508, https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/.
229 Jerome Bertram, *St Aloysius' Parish Oxford, ... 1793–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 3.
230 VR 1834, St Clement.
231 Tiller, *Church and Chapel,* pp. xxxvi, xliii.

Image 4-10 Henry Taunt, St Ignatius Roman Catholic Chapel, interior, 1906



Image 4-11 Henry Taunt, St Ignatius, arranged for mid-week school, 1906



families from Headington and Marston, [232] the city itself[233] and its lodger community,[234] and from parishes further away such as Iffley. Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century there remained within English Catholicism a wish to remain apart from their Protestant neighbours, as evidenced in successive edits of the English catechism that included statements emphasising the distinct otherness of Roman Catholics, and in the growth of exclusively Roman Catholic societies.[235] The first Vatican Council of 1870, with its unequivocal support of the doctrine on infallibility, further cemented Roman Catholicism apart from even the most high Clergy hoping for a partial reconciliation.[236]

When in 1875 a larger church of St Aloysius was built, the following was spoken:

> That Oxford is of all places the one that calls for the erection of a noble catholic church is self-evident: the very stones are calling it out. What place is there in all of England that can show such vestiges of the ancient faith as are to be seen in the streets of Oxford?[237]

Regardless of this a similar tactic to St Ignatius was adopted, and even though located more centrally within the city on Woodstock Road, St Aloysius was purposefully concealed behind a row of houses, and remained out of immediate sight from the street until 1925.[238] The new father reverend S.J. Morris noted that for Catholics in

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232 VR 1808, St Andrew Headington; and VR 1808, St Nicholas Marston.
233 VR 1808, St Peter-le-Bailey; VR 1814, St Ebbe; and VR 1823, St Mary Magdalen.
234 VR 1808, St Peter in the East.
235 Mary Heimann, *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), chap. 4.
236 Mark D. Chapman, *The Fantasy of Reunion: Anglicans, Catholics, and Ecumenism, 1833–1882* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 203.
237 'The New Roman Catholic Church', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (22 May 1873), pp. 6–7.
238 Cyril Charlie Martindale, *Catholics in Oxford, ... 1581 Down to the Present Day* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1925), p. 27.

Oxford it had been 'a long winter, and that, thanks to God, we have the promise of spring at last'.[239]

Within the visitation returns the question of how many Roman Catholics lived in the parish stopped being asked systematically from 1838, and for the most part the Roman Catholic presence in Oxford passed unnoticed. When ministers reported that no Roman Catholics lived in their parish, about 70% qualified their answer with words to the effect that this was only to the best of their knowledge, and it would not be unreasonable to interpret the remaining replies under a similar proviso. The Anglican ministers were seemingly unaware of who in their parish was Roman Catholic, and despite being regularly asked by their bishop to report their number, it seems they made no effort to do so. But, regardless, the number was small, and was noticeably lower than other Roman Catholic records. The 1767 papist returns recorded 23 Roman Catholics in Oxford, and when the first priest at St Ignatius moved to Oxford in 1793 he justified his decision because there were about 60 Roman Catholics at Oxford, which was more than at his previous location in Waterperry.[240] By 1832 he reported the number of communicants to be about 130, noting at the time that Oxford was a town where the University and Church 'reign triumphant over every principle of Christianity'.[241] In 1851 a member of the Roman Catholic congregation told the city's registrar the usual congregation size was 70–

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239 'The New Roman Catholic Church', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (22 May 1873), pp. 6–7.

240 Martindale, *Catholics in Oxford*, p. 18.

241 Bertram, *St Aloysius*, p. 7.

80,[242] and by the 1860s possibly about 100 people, mostly from the middle class.[243] How reliable these figures are, however, is complicated by the probable practice of some Roman Catholics who understated the strength of English Catholic numbers in order to encourage further toleration.[244]

Records in the visitation returns (Table 4-3) also suggest ministers were aware of very few Roman Catholics living in their parish. The largest number, 16 people or three families, was in St Clement, the parish housing St Ignatius and their priest. In

Table 4-3 Number or description of Roman Catholics living in parishes, according to the visitation returns

'0' = 'none'; 'fy/fys' = 'family/families'; blank = no response.

Parish	1802	1805	1808	1811	1814	1817	1820	1823	1834	1860	1878
Binsey		0	0		0	0	0	0	0		
Cowley		0		0	0	0	0	0	'some'		
Headington	0	0	1	0		1	1				
Holywell			0	0		0	0	0			
Iffley		0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Marston	2	0	4		1 fy	1 fy	1 fy				4
St Aldate	0		0		0			0			
St Clement		4	8	1 fy	16	3 fys					
St Ebbe	0	0	0	0	1 fy	0		0			
St Giles	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	'few'		
St Martin (Carfax)			0	0	0	0	0				
St Mary Oxford			0	0		0		0			
St Mary Magdalen	0	0	0		0	0	0	2			
St Peter-le-Bailey			1	0		0	0	0			
St Peter in the East			2			0		0			
St Thomas		0		0	0	0	0	0		4	

242 Tiller, *Church and Chapel*, p. 76.

243 Bertram, *St Aloysius*, p. 12; this figure was provided as part of an argument by Bishop Ullathorne for not establishing a Catholic presence in Oxford and so needs to be taken with some caution.

244 Peter B. Nockles, 'The Difficulties of Protestantism: Bishop Milner, John Fletcher and Catholic Apologetic against the Church of England in the Era from the First Relief Act to Emancipation, 1778–1830', *Recusant History,* 24/2 (1998), n. 12, pp. 126–27.

the three later visitations that included a question on Roman Catholic numbers, it was nearly always ignored and left blank.

Roman Catholic representation in the University was minimal; despite being permitted entry from 1871 a formal ban by the Roman Catholic hierarchy on attendance remained in place, and few Roman Catholics were willing to ignore the edict.[245] It was a Roman Catholic concern, strongly supported by the ultramontane party in England, that University teaching would have an adverse influence on young minds, that fuelled this ban. In 1864 Manning and Wiseman wrote that they were 'entirely opposed to … the heretical intellectual culture of the country',[246] and in 1871 Bishop Ullathorne moved against establishing a more significant church in Oxford 'lest it should attract Catholic youth there for their education'. Roman Catholic resistance to establishing an Oxford presence peaked in 1872,[247] and by the time the ban was lifted in 1896 the congregation was remembered by one attendee as a 'huddled little flock … drawn mostly from modest commercial and industrial circles. On the whole we were ignored, and it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise, for civicly we were negligible'.[248]

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245 Lord Braye, 'Preface', in Thomas Murphy, (ed.), *The Position of the Catholic Church in England and Wales During the Last Two Centuries: Retrospect and Forecast* (London: Burns and Oates, 1892), pp. 6–7; see also Hinchliff, 'Religious Issues', p. 104.

246 Cited in Bertram, *St Aloysius*, pp. 13, 16.

247 Alberic Stacpoole, 'The Return of the Roman Catholics to Oxford', *New Blackfriars,* 67/791 (1986), p. 224.

248 Margaret Fletcher, *O, Call Back Yesterday* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1939), p. 131.

Dissent

At the start of the century infiltration among the poor of revolutionary ideas — in particular Jacobinism —was seen as an alarming possibility that the Church had a duty to address. Nonconforming churches were to many Clergy identified as a dangerous wellspring from which unpatriotic ideals could be nationally disseminated. Of particular concern to many Anglican clergy was the degree to which nonconformity challenged their status as the country's national religious institution. Alongside urban centres with rapidly rising populations, English dissent was concentrated mostly in the regions north of London up to the Scottish border, with smaller pockets of significant dissenting strength in Cornwall and the south-west, and in areas south of the Severn into the old west country woollen industrial area.[249] The levels of dissent in 1851 within the parishes in this thesis will be examined below.

The scale and intensity of religious diversity in nineteenth-century England, with multiplying Protestant denominations running successful missions, often followed by rapid growth and, sometimes, debilitating schisms, changed the country's religious culture in ways that differed from previous centuries, as well as from religious developments that were taking place in Europe.[250] The years leading up to the 1868 Compulsory Church Rate Abolition Act, which made payment of the parochial church rate voluntary, and the 1880 Burial Laws Amendment Act, permitting non-Anglican burial services to be conducted in Anglican churchyards, saw, over a span of several

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249 Dissenting denominations enjoyed different levels of success within these areas; for more complete details see Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, esp. chaps. 3 and 4.

250 Alasdair Charles Crockett, 'A Secularising Geography? Patterns and Processes of Religious Change in England and Wales, 1676–1851', doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 1998, p. 2.

years, an increase in the intensity and number of Clergy engaged in anti-dissent protest. And yet, alongside these remonstrations at the national level, in the second half of the century a perceptible softening towards dissent can also be identified.

The pattern of dissent flourishing in urban settings is less straightforwardly identifiable in nineteenth-century Oxford. Describing the late 1850s, a biographer of Methodist minister Gregory observed that

> With the University [of Oxford] the one unpardonable sin was attendance at a nonconformist church. Dog-fighting, all sorts of loose escapades and low habits might be condoned, but the line must be drawn somewhere, and it was drawn at the Methodist chapel.[251]

A key impediment was the historic resistance from University members committed to maintaining an Anglican monopoly within the city. For most of the eighteenth century this campaign was successful, and throughout the nineteenth century it remained a persistent hindrance that only started to lighten towards the end of the century. Obstacles that Oxford's dissenters faced included the University's policy of not allowing its properties to be sold for meeting houses,[252] boycotting dissenter's businesses and refusing them work,[253] disrupting services,[254] and forbidding students to attend services, even to the point of proctors entering services to monitor this.[255] Oxford was considered 'one of the most difficult stations which a

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251 John Robinson Gregory, (ed.), *Benjamin Gregory, DD: Autobiographical Recollections ... with Memorials of his Later Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), p. 407.

252 James J. Moore, *Earlier and Later Nonconformity in Oxford* (Oxford: John Jakeman, 1875), p. 6; James Edwin Oxley, *A History of Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxonian Press, 1967), p. 9.

253 Walter Stevens and Walter Wright Bottoms, *The Baptists of New Road, Oxford* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1948), p. 12.

254 John Howard Hinton, *A Biographical Portraiture of the Late Rev. James Hinton* (Oxford: Bartlett and Hinton, 1824), p. 130.

255 Moore, *Nonconformity in Oxford*, p. 27.

nonconformist minister in England could have'.[256] Efforts by Primitive Methodists in 1825 to gain a foothold in Oxford, for example, ended in riots such that ministers claimed they had never previously witnessed.[257] James Spence, Congregationalist minister 1845–47, noted 'difficulties which are perhaps peculiar to that place [Oxford] … in such a city a certain degree of reproach is attached to all forms of Dissent from the established Church'.[258]

A second source of impediment in the second half of the century is the presence of a new generation of Clergy who were more numerous, present, and committed to addressing the needs of their parishioners. The assertion that a multiplicity of religious beliefs freely competing with each other leads overall to a diminution of religious activity has been frequently argued, but, as has been pointed out on numerous occasions, this is a claim that cannot be properly tested when applying it to local historical data.[259] Although not possible to measure overall, certainly the Anglican competition can be seen as having a detrimental effect on Oxford's

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256 Joseph Ivimey, *The Excellence and Utility of an Evangelical Ministry ... Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. J. Hinton* (London: John Offor, 1823), p. 3.

257 John Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origin to the Conference of 1860*, new edn (London: R. Davies, 1864), p. 231; with no report of the incident in the local papers the accuracy of their account is difficult to verify. It was several years before Primitive Methodism made another attempt, albeit a more successful one, renting the St Clement Methodist chapel following the move of the Wesleyans to Caroline Street in 1839.

258 Michael Hopkins, *Spires and Meeting Houses: a History of the Origins, Growth, and Development of Congregationalism in and around Oxford* ([no place]: John Owen Press, 2011), p. 44 and n. 63; the quote is taken from their minister's resignation notice in 1845.

259 For a classic presentation of this see Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967), esp. chaps. 6–7, which argues that pluralism introduced a crisis of credibility to 'the man in the street'; for a meta-study scrutinizing this see for example David Voas, Daniel V.A. Olson, and Alasdair Crockett, 'Religious Pluralism and Participation: Why Previous Research is Wrong', *American Sociological Review,* 67/2 (2002), pp. 212–30.

nonconformity in the nineteenth century. Both the high churchmen and the Tractarians bitterly opposed dissenting teaching, and the Oxford liberals, who carried greater influence from the second half of the century, also loathed them, despite — or maybe because of— requiring their cooperation in Westminster to secure the passage of certain bills.[260]

Against such opposition, a key component of nonconformist efforts to establish themselves in Oxford was acquiring a building that not only proclaimed their presence in the city, but also conferred status and respectability. This helped attract tradesmen, shopkeepers, and craftsmen, and, with the gradual rise of prosperity of the artisan class, the dissenting church's social status rose somewhat, with membership including leaders of local businesses and small industry.[261] A decision by a dwindling number of Methodists in 1815 to replace their meeting house with a larger stone chapel was a bold gamble to attract new converts and secure the church's Oxford presence (Image 4-12).[262] Completed in 1818, its three-bay classical edifice with double columns was a statement of austere, urban classicism, signalling to the city a depth of seriousness and intent that matched that of its neighbouring

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260 W.R. Ward, 'From Tractarians to the Executive Commission, 1845–1854', in Michael George Brock and Mark C. Curthoys, (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford: Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 309; see also Wilberforce in 1837 writing on 'the misery of having to court the Dissenters in order to maintain political consistency', Ashwell, *Wilberforce*, p. 108.

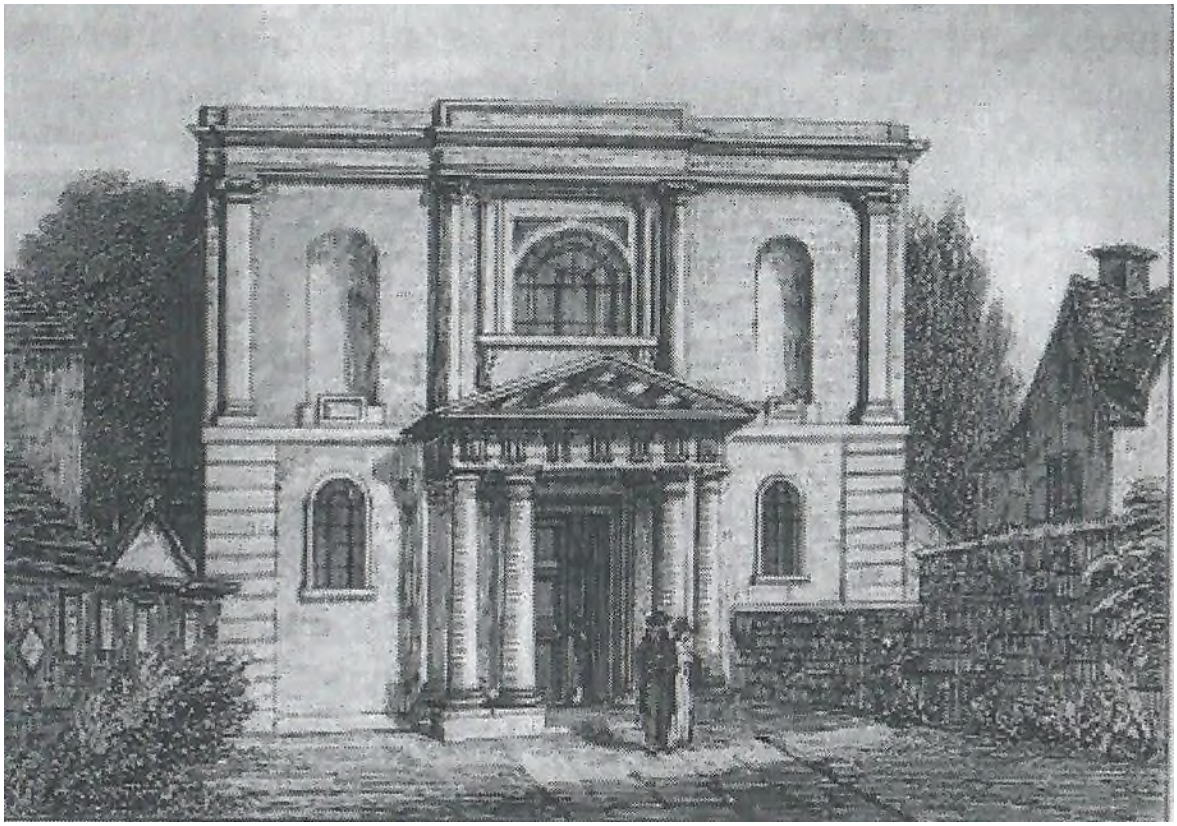
261 Hopkins, *Spires and Meeting Houses*, pp. 36, 42, 54.

262 Image reproduced from Steven Parissien, *The Comfort of the Past: Building in Oxford and Beyond, 1815–2015* (London: Paul Holberton, 2015), p. 13.

Image 4-12 New Inn Hall Street Chapel, Methodist, 1817



Image 4-13 New Road Church in 1824, showing 1819 changes



Anglican churches.[263] The following year the New Road Church followed suit, enlarging their 1798 building and adding a classical façade (Image 4-13).[264]

This approach continued in 1832, when a split at New Road Church led to a Congregationalist place of public worship being established in the adjoining St Mary Magdalen parish on George Street.[265] At a cost of £3,400[266] the new brick building, in an Anglo-Norman style and seating 500 people, became the mother church of Congregationalism for the surrounding area.[267] To the Anglican minister of the parish the Congregationalists had wrongly appropriated an architectural style that ought to designate the established Church only. He noted the dissenting chapel's 'unusual Architectural pretensions', and, when costing a design of an Anglican chapel of ease on the same street in 1849, complained that:

> A very plain building might be mistaken for the Meeting and the Meeting for the Church. I consider therefore, that an extension of an unmistakable character and evident ecclesiastical arrangement is necessary in this case.[268]

Building more prestigious chapels was expensive. It took the Methodists 51 years to pay off the debt for their 1818 build, but, almost immediately upon completing this, they set in motion a plan to build a still larger place of worship.[269] When completed

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263 *ibid.*, pp. 12–14.

264 Image reproduced from Tim Grass, '"Walking Together in Unity and Peace and the Fear of God": the Challenge of Maintaining Ecumenical Ideals, 1780–1860', in Rosemary E. Chadwick, (ed.), *A Protestant Catholic Church of Christ: Essays on the History and Life of New Road Baptist Church, Oxford* (Oxford: New Road Baptist Church, 2003), p. 151.

265 At the time sometimes known as George Lane.

266 £1,400 was for the land, see Hopkins, *Spires and Meeting Houses*, p. 37.

267 William Henry Summers, *History of the Congregational Churches in the Berks, South Oxon, and South Bucks Association* (Newbury: W.J. Blacket, 1905), p. 246.

268 Jacob Ley, LPL, ICBS 4140: letter to Incoporated Church Building Society, 25 May 1849, f. 2.

269 'Memorial Sketch of the Rev. Richard Bell', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (1878), p. 885.

in 1879 the high-pitched gabled windows and diapered stonework made the new building 'a prominent feature in this city, to the spires and towers to which it is no unworthy addition'.[270] As in Oxford, many Methodists in the second half of the nineteenth century rebuilt their meeting houses into gothic-inspired structures, while retaining a preaching-box arrangement within.[271] The new chapel's position alongside remains of the city's medieval wall and at the terminating end of New Inn Hall Street,[272] together with its 130-foot spire, was a bold statement that literally could not be overlooked (Image 4-14, p. 286).[273]

Nonconformist ministers who managed to cultivate relationships with University academics generally oversaw more successful ministries. An early instance of this was James Hinton (minister New Road Chapel, 1788–1823), who managed this such that the University informally tolerated his work on condition that he did not proselytise students.[274] Methodist superintendent Benjamin Gregory had arrived at Oxford in 1857 to find the denomination 'in a truly pitiful condition … internal dissentions had reduced it almost to a ruin' and the Methodist Oxford Society on the

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270 'Opening of the Wesley Memorial Chapel', *OT* (12 October 1878), p. 8; 'Opening of the Wesley Memorial Chapel', *OT* (19 October 1878), p. 7; *JOJ* did not report on the opening of the new Methodist church.

271 Edward Royle, 'From Philistines to Goths: Nonconformist Chapel Styles in Victorian England', in Christopher Dyer, and others, (eds.), *New Directions in Local History Since Hoskins* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011), p. 189; the gothic Methodist church in Cowley designed by J.S. Salter was built in 1904, and is not covered in this thesis.

272 In the 1870s New Inn Hall Street ran north, and then from the Methodist chapel turned 90 degrees east along what today is called St Michael's Street; today the ancient town wall and bastion are gone, which allows New Inn Hall Street to continue to George Street.

273 Henry Taunt, Looking west along St Michaels Street to the Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, 1907: record CC56/00732, https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/.

274 Hinton, *Biographical Portraiture of Hinton*, pp. 107–08.

verge of bankruptcy.[275] Gregory became the first nonconformist to address Oxford's Bible Society, and under his leadership, within some parts of the University,

Image 4-14 Wesley Memorial Methodist Church was a prominent religious landmark, 1907



animosity to Methodism softened, and gownsmen were able to attend Methodist services without fear of reproof from the proctors or heads of houses.[276] George Maunder (superintendent 1876–79), confided in his diary that the Methodism at Oxford was 'by far the feeblest I have ever been connected with',[277] and another

275 Gregory, *Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 407; Oxley, *Wesley Memorial Church*, p. 22.
276 Gregory, *Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 408.
277 Thomas F. Maunder, 'Memorials of the Rev. George and Mrs Maunder', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (1881), p. 401.

minister, possibly Frederick Greeves or Joshua Mason, reported to prospective minister Hughes that Methodism in Oxford was hopeless and dead.[278]

Under the later leadership of Hugh Price Hughes, 1881–84, Methodist membership swelled to almost 400. A graduate from London University, Hughes managed to establish stronger networks with the University, with an academic manner that ingratiated him with University men, and a developing interest in Christian socialism as taught by Balliol philosopher Thomas H. Green.[279] Following Hughes's success, the Methodist Conference agreed that the leading minister at Oxford should always be awarded to a scholar[280] and for the remainder of the century membership numbers fluctuated between 250 and 300 members.

One dissenting minister who particularly attracted the University's opprobrium was Henry Bulteel. Initially a perpetual curate at St Ebbe (from 1826), Bulteel quickly became one of the most popular preachers in Oxford.[281] The intensity of his preaching style was popular with undergraduates, but his hyper Calvinism, close connections with dissenters, and use of extempore prayer attracted strong criticism.[282] Following a revocation of his licence in 1831, Bulteel preached in his

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278 H.K. and Hugh Price Hughes, *Hugh Price Hughes: Leader of the Forward Movement; and The Revival of Oxford Methodism* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1903), p. 34; His daughter [Dorothea Price Hughes], *The Life of Hugh Price Hughes* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), p. 137.

279 Diane Lee Grosso, 'Hugh Price Hughes: Late Victorian Nonconformity and the Kingdom of God', MA thesis, Florida Atlantic University, 2004.

280 Oxley, *Wesley Memorial Church*, p. 34.

281 W.E. Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement: its Parentage, Progress, and Issue', *British Quarterly Review,* 70 (1879), p. 8.

282 Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the Via Media, c.1800–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 311, see also chapter 1, passim.

garden for a time,[283] before building the Adullam Chapel in St Ebbe, mostly at his own expense. It seated 800 people, and to the St Ebbe minister was a competing place of worship[284] where Bulteel actively preached against the Church.[285]

By the end of the century the full horrors of the Revolutionary Wars had receded sufficiently for historian Bishop William Stubbs to frame them more positively as events that helped propel a somnambulant Church into an age of reform and revival.[286] In Oxford, parties within the Church were managing to reconcile differences that in the 1840s had almost torn them apart, and Clergy open to cooperating with local protestant denominations slowly started to include not just the evangelicals. Following the Universities Tests Act of 1871, the University's theology school appointed nonconformist lecturers to its faculty immediately. When in 1893 Unitarian college Manchester moved from Warrington to Oxford, and Congregational Mansfield College moved from Birmingham to Oxford in 1886, their dissenting influence 'transformed Oxford's theological life'.[287]

Other denominations, such as the Salvation Army, were entirely devoted to reaching the lower orders in the city. Less invested in cultivating middle-class respectability, a church culture was developed to connect with the poorest and uneducated classes. The Salvation Army's first venture into Oxford was a mid-week service on 3 April

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283 W. E. Gladstone, *The Gladstone Diaries*, ed. M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew, vol. 1: *1825–1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 384 [25 September 1831].

284 VRs 1834, 1838, St Ebbe.

285 Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, pp. 280–81. Following a number of conflicting religious conversions and then a breakdown, Bulteel had left Oxford by the late 1840s; see also Tim Grass, '"The Restoration of a Congregation of Baptists": Baptists and Irvingism in Oxfordshire', *Baptist Quarterly,* 37 (1998).

286 Stubbs, 'Fourth Charge', pp. 345–46.

287 Inman, *Making of Modern English Theology*, p. 167.

1881[288] and they quickly founded a permanent presence in the city as the Salvation Army Mission at the Temperance Hall in the parish of St Ebbe. Their preaching was reported as 'pabulum offered to the hearers':[289] on one sermon expounding Psalm 34 the *Oxford Chronicle* sardonically observed that 'the distinct utterances and occasional racy remarks and comments secured for the reader [Miss Smith] the riveted attention of her audience'.[290] Services were noted as being unruly and enthusiastic, with, for example, people shouting 'hallelujah' while stamping, dancing, groaning, and younger members hugging each other at the end of the service.[291]

Processing through the streets was a widespread nineteenth-century phenomenon practised by religious institutions that shifted religious ritual out from the confines of a building into a larger public space.[292] The Salvation Army followed this practice throughout the country, and their marches were usually accompanied by instrumental music playing popular tunes that had been appropriated as hymns.[293] In Oxford these processions regularly started at the Martyrs' Memorial, often with an open-air service there, much to the frustration of the minister of the adjoining church of St Mary Magdalen, who complained that the Salvation Army 'leaves the scum of the crowds in the street' and interfered with their evening services.[294] While marching, church members might wave white handkerchiefs, and attracted considerable

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288 'Salvation Army in Oxford', *OT* (9 April 1881), p. 5; and 'The Salvation Army', *OC* (29 April 1882), p. 2.
289 'The Salvation Army at Oxford', *OT* (8 October 1881), p. 7.
290 'The Salvation Army', *OC* (29 April 1882), p. 2.
291 'The Salvation Army at Oxford', *OT* (8 October 1881), p. 7; on hugging see 'Opening of the New Salvation Army Barracks', *JOJ* (29 October 1888), p. 5.
292 O'Leary, *Claiming the Streets: Processions and Urban Culture in South Wales c.1830–1880*, p. 123.
293 'Reading: the Salvation Army', *JOJ* (2 April 1881), p. 7.
294 VR 1890, St Mary Magdalen.

crowds of children and 'roughs'. In one procession that devolved into a riot in St Aldate it was estimated that 150 church members were leading a group of up to 1,500 people. Charges raised by the Local Board against some of the church members were dropped, with the disturbances under investigation being instead credited to an Oxford division of the 'Skeleton Army', [295] a name applied to groups of mostly young people who coordinated opposition that often satirically echoed the Salvation Army's language and style.[296] In 1888 a new 'barracks' was built at a cost of £1,500. Its main hall seated 1,200 people, and was lit with gas.[297]

Because records left by the dissenters themselves are generally more complete, using Anglican visitation returns to measure nineteenth-century dissent is rare, although not unheard of.[298] Within the visitation returns in this study, bishops requested details regarding parochial dissent 1802–34, 1854–72, and 1878–81. Although the exact wording underwent minor reformulations ministers were consistently asked to provide the number of dissenters living within their parish, and, up to 1869, to identify any dissenting meeting places. The highest level of detail was required in the returns for 1808–23, when the questions were expressed as follows:

> Are there any Dissenters, and of what denomination? And how many of each denomination? Are you of an opinion that they have increased of late years, and to what amount? What Teachers of each are there resident in the Parish,

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295 'The Salvation Army Disturbances', *JOJ* (2 December 1882), p. 6.

296 Pamela Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: the Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 226; from time to time the Oxford branch was required to stop their marches, see for example 'The Salvation Army', *JOJ* (15 October 1881), p. 5.

297 'Opening of the New Salvation Army Barracks', *JOJ* (29 October 1888), p. 5.

298 See for example Royle's study on semi-separatism using visitation returns: Edward Royle, 'When did Methodists Stop Attending their Parish Churches? Some Suggestions from Mid-Nineteenth century Yorkshire', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society,* 56 (2008), pp. 275–96.

> or occasionally visiting it? Are they licensed? What places have they of Public Meeting, licensed or others?

The manner in which these questions were framed within the returns adds complexity to interpreting the clergy answers. Firstly, in the visitation returns responses on dissenting activity were by default separated along parish lines, but these boundaries were irrelevant to dissenting activity in urban settings. Dissenters envisaged their work as circuits that ran through towns and villages, or as hubs, with a larger 'mother church' surrounded by smaller meeting places in neighbouring villages.

Secondly, details were being asked about services of which Anglican ministers did not have first-hand knowledge. Providing the number of meeting houses was relatively straightforward; indeed some ministers were aware of unlicensed meeting houses that are not mentioned elsewhere. Attendance and membership figures, however, were usually unknown to the minister, and by the second half of the century ministers, especially in quickly growing urban parishes, were starting to complain that the question was unreasonable. In counting places of dissent the numbers from visitation returns are higher than formal listings such as parliamentary returns, [299] and so potentially provide a more accurate picture of the presence of nonconformity than some other records (Graph 4-2 and Table 4-4, p. 292). For example, in 1869 a few dissenters were meeting in a 'very small building' in Marston that is without any other record, but may have been an antecedent of a Congregationalist mission hall

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[299] *House of Commons Sessional Papers 1882*, vol. 50 (no. 401), *Return of Churches, Chapels and Buildings registered for Religious Worship in Great Britain*, pp. 169, 266.

Graph 4-2 Number of dissenting places of worship identified by clergy in visitation returns, urban and not urban

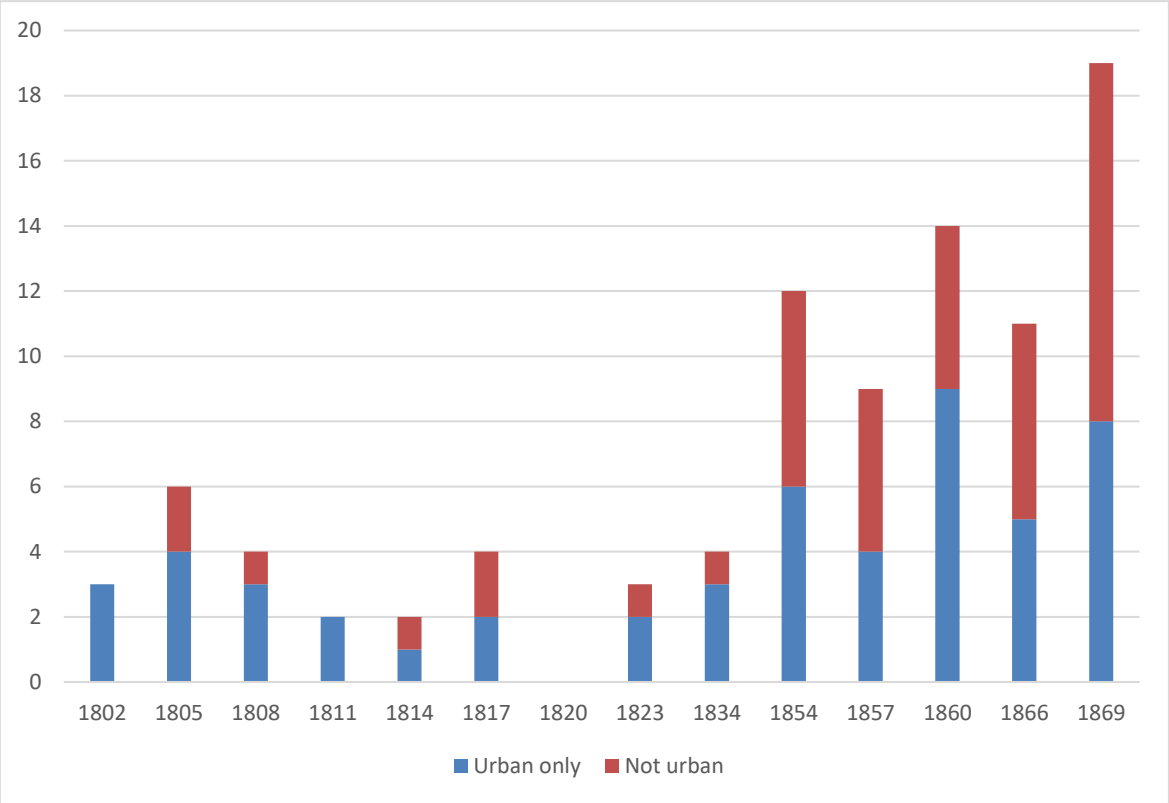


Table 4-4 Number of dissenting places of worship by parish in 1869 visitation returns

Parish	No.
Cowley St James	4
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	1
Headington St Andrews	1
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	1
Marston St Nicholas	1
Oxford St Clement	2
Oxford St Ebbe	2
Oxford St Ebbe: Holy Trinity	1
Oxford St Michael	1
Oxford St Paul	1
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	2
Oxford St Thomas	1
Summertown St John the Baptist	1
Total	**19**

established by their Cowley Road chapel in Marston a few years later.[300] In Cowley St John it was noted that an unlicensed 'small room' was being used for dissenting meetings.[301]

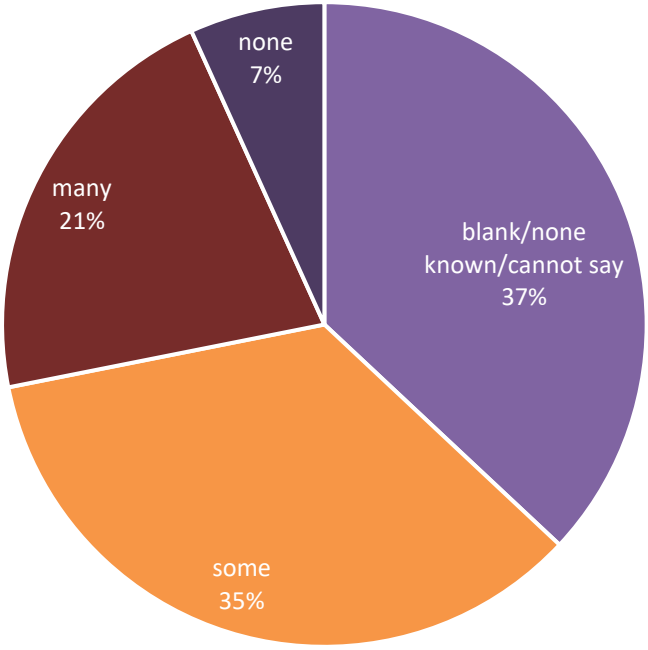
As with the question on absentees discussed in the next chapter, printed above this question on the visitation return was another on parishioners that had been framed to count only people 'of note … either anciently settled in the parish or newly removed there'. In this context it is possible that the minister, either consciously or unconsciously, applied a similar filter to questions on dissent: only people of influence or importance needed to be accounted for, especially if it was taken for granted and thus unremarkable that there existed some dissent in the lower orders of the parish. When dissenters are being counted, they can be dismissed as of little import, such as at Headington, with 'two or three [dissenting] Families only, and there of the lower class, who frequent the meeting house in St Peter's in the Bailey'.[302]

Although responses to these questions provide 445 different pieces of information on dissent, these details appear in fewer than half of the parishes being reviewed. Throughout the century, and peaking in the 1860s, it seems many ministers struggled to supply responses regarding dissent, preferring to leave a response blank rather than writing something either uninformed or inaccurate. What the returns provide instead is an incomplete, but nevertheless revealing, picture of dissenting activity as seen through the eyes of each parish's officiating minister. Overall, 58% of the

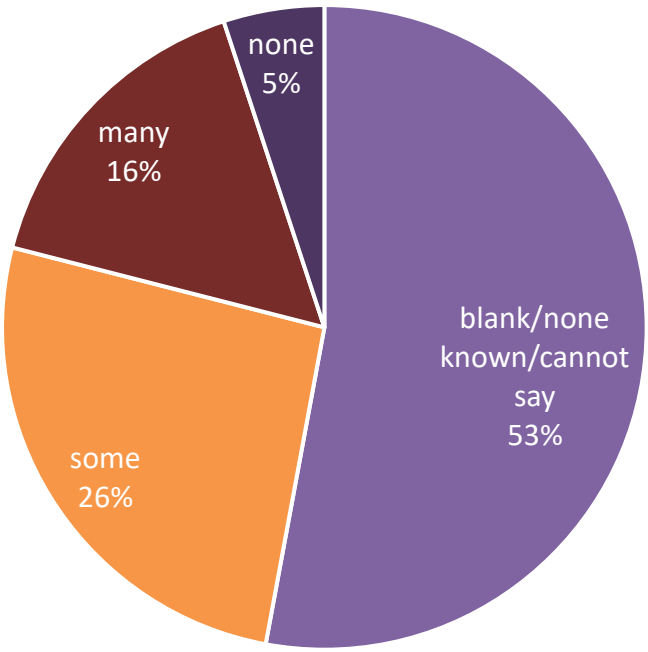
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300 VR 1869, Marston; on how records are non-existent see Hopkins, *Spires and Meeting Houses*, pp. 118–19.
301 VR 1872, Cowley St John.
302 VR 1802, St Andrew.

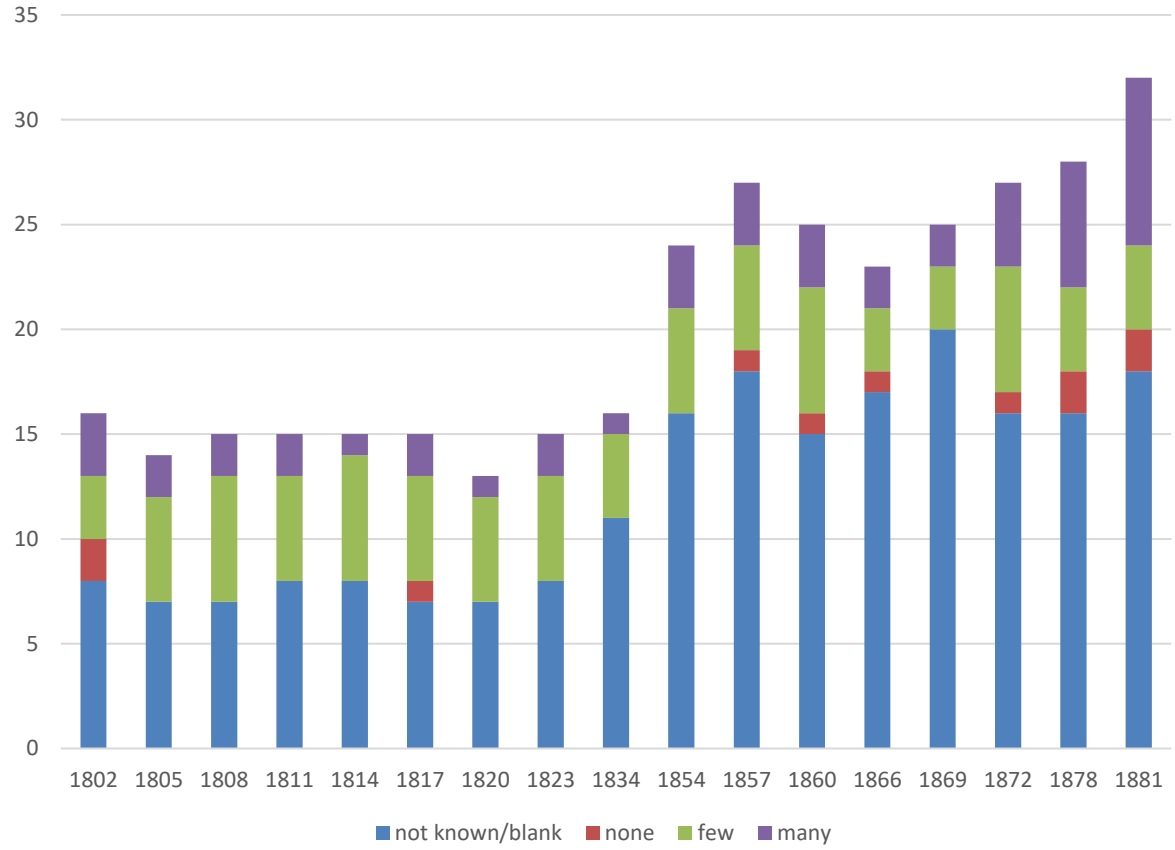
Graph 4-3 Responses to question of dissent in parish, 1802–34



Graph 4-4 Responses to question of dissent in parish, 1854–87



Graph 4-5 Dissent: attendances



returns were either blank, or else recorded that the minister did not know the details or could not find out (Graph 4-3, Graph 4-4, and Graph 4-5).

In 1811 the St Ebbe minister counted 60–80 Anabaptists and Methodists living in the parish, with their number slowly increasing. But by 1872 the response was instead that 'I cannot tell even approximately, as there is a constantly shifting population and many lodgers whom I never see':[303] a note that also shows the connection the minister had made between dissent and the poorer inhabitants of his parish. The rector at neighbouring St Aldate similarly observed that 'I cannot answer this with

[303] VR 1811, St Ebbe; VR 1872, Holy Trinity St Ebbe.

sufficient accuracy to make the reply satisfactory to myself'.[304] The vicar at St Giles in 1869 plaintively noted that 'I have no means at present of ascertaining the number of dissenters'.[305] Stating that one was not able to say was sometimes an indication of rising numbers: at Summertown dissenting numbers were '200 or less' in 1866, from '200 to 250' in 1869, and then finally by 1872 the respondent reports he can no longer provide a figure.[306]

The responses provide an insight into the degree to which dissent and urbanization were impacting the Church's perception of itself as a national institution to be accessed by all parts of English society, and the integrity of the parochial system. Over the century 14% of parishes recorded many dissenters.[307]

Semi-separatists further complicate the picture, with many ministers noting that dissenters attended at least some Anglican services throughout the year, with some attending more regularly. Exactly how hostile dissenters were to the Church depended in part on their denomination. Wesleyan Methodists were in general more open to attending a mix of service types; the Anabaptists much less so.[308] Wilberforce's opinion was that the sizeable overlap between Church and Chapel attendances rendered dissent numbers in the 1851 census 'utterly fallacious'.[309] Throughout the century ministers, in the returns in this review, frequently refer to this arrangement. At St Clement we learn that in 1811 five families were attending

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304 VR 1872, St Aldate.
305 VR 1869, St Giles.
306 VRs 1866, 1869, 1872, St John the Baptist Summertown.
307 Most responses used text to describe dissent numbers, but in responses providing a count, parishes recording 50 or more dissenters have been labelled as 'many'.
308 VR 1834, St Andrew Headington.
309 Wilberforce, *1854 Charge*, p. 41.

the New Road Baptist Church, but four of these families 'sometimes also attend Church'. At St Thomas in 1820 it was noted that the eight to ten people who attended the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in New Inn Hall Street did not describe themselves as dissenters, as they also attended church in their parish.[310] At Headington in 1834 there was 'one family of Anabaptists – and several Bultielite and other dissenters but all occasionally attend the church excepting the Anabaptists'.[311] At Iffley it was estimated that twelve families may identify as dissenters, 'but the greater number come to church occasionally'.[312] Further on in the century at St Giles in 1860 it was estimated that 100–200 members 'drift about from Church to Chapel; for instance hearing the Town Hall sermons yet coming to Church',[313] many of which were later noted as being communicants,[314] as were parishioners at Headington Quarry.[315] In some of the returns, remarks by ministers suggest that motives for attending either a dissenting or Anglican church service were sometimes more pragmatic than theological. In St Ebbe people attended the dissenting church in most cases for 'the pleasure of having a seat to themselves;[316] and at Littlemore it was noted that many dissenters began attending SS Mary and Nicholas following the establishment of a Sunday school.[317] Perhaps one of the harshest interpretations of parishioners attending dissenting meetings was at Cowley, where the perpetual curate wrote that many parishioners were occasionally present, but 'from the

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310 VR 1820, St Thomas.
311 VR 1834, Headington; the 'Bultielites' refer to individuals attending services led by Henry Bulteel; discussed p. 290.
312 VR 1854, Iffley.
313 VR 1860, St Giles.
314 VR 1878, St Giles.
315 VRs 1866, 1872, Holy Trinity Headington Quarry.
316 VR 1857, St Ebbe.
317 VR 1817, Cowley St James.

information I have been able to collect it appears that they are principally young persons who attend for the purpose of attacking the Methodistical Party';[318] if true it is hard not to conclude that relations between the two parties were strained.

In his 1834 charge Bishop Bagot singled out the Wesleyan Methodists as being animated by 'the truly Christian spirit', leading him to hope for a day where they might be seen as 'not almost, but together'.[319] Wilberforce's attitude to dissent was much less accommodating. While rector in the 1830s at Brighstone (also known as Brixton) in the Isle of Wight, for example, he had managed to persuade farmers to sack labourers who attended Bible Christian meetings, and successfully stopped dissenters from using a farmer's barn as a meeting place.[320] In 1838 he described another denomination 'a set of evil ones' who targeted none but the poorest and most ignorant; and by 1841 he stated that developments of party spirit within the Church had led him to 'a position of more direct opposition to the School than I had of old felt necessary'. As bishop of Oxford, having learnt that the vicar at High Wycombe coordinated pastoral work with a dissenting minister with an agreement 'through grace to merge sectarian differences in a brotherly effort to reach the most depraved' of the parish, Wilberforce reprimanded the minister for violating his ordination vows and betraying the Church in order to 'obtain a little fleeting personal favour … under the specious pretext of liberality'.[321]

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318 VR 1805, Cowley St James.
319 Bagot, *Charge 1834*, p. 20.
320 Watts, *The Dissenters*, p. 154.
321 Ashwell, *Wilberforce*, pp. 127, 205–06.

Concern over protestant dissent was much less amongst the evangelical ministers. When in 1874 Christopher held a series of anti-popery lectures in his rectory room, for example, pains were taken to distinguish between 'the sorceries of Rome', and Methodism, which ought to be dealt with 'gently, tenderly, and reverently'.[322] Cooperation between nonconformists and the Anglican church, especially with the more evangelical Clergy, was often quite public. One of the most visible examples were the two four-day missions in 1882 and 1892 of D.L. Moody, a non-denominational popular American preacher. Christopher of St Aldate was chairman of the organizing committees that comprised Clergy and nonconformist ministers,[323] and the choir at the event included Anglican and nonconformist singers. In 1882 after each evening service Moody preached separately to University undergraduates in the Clarendon hotel.[324] For both visits all venues were crowded for every meeting and were full at least an hour before the scheduled start, with, it was observed, the ladies 'preponderating'.[325]

Anglican dominance: 1851 religious census

The only existing nineteenth-century records that systematically evaluated both Anglicans and dissenters in Oxford using primary source data are the returns of the 1851 religious census. The degree to which it successfully represented the religious habits of the nation has been much debated, and its defectiveness, accuracy, and

322 'Historic Novelties and Historic Doubts', *Oxford Undergraduate's Journal* (23 April 1874), p. 3.
323 Reynolds, *Canon Christopher*, p. 227.
324 'Messrs Moody and Sankey in Oxford', *JOJ* (18 November 1882), p. 5.
325 'Mr D.L. Moody in Oxford', *JOJ* (26 November 1892), p. 6.

ambiguity well documented.[326] Immediate nineteenth-century concerns were that the management of the census was flawed, that the figures were unreliable, and that, regardless of accuracy, factors such as bad weather, people being elsewhere for Mothering Sunday, and dissenters encouraging members to attend extra services, resulted in figures that did not reflect a normal Sunday.[327] But these deficiencies have not precluded the figures from the census forming an important yardstick for measuring religion and church activity.[328]

So concerned was Wilberforce with the data taken from the 1851 census that in 1854 he included a specific question for his third visitation, requesting 'information as to the correctness of the numbers given in the recent census of members of the Church and of dissenters or as to the mode in which the returns were made on which those estimates were founded'. The responses were perhaps not what Wilberforce was expecting: excluding those from clergy who did not take part in the 1851 census and so were not qualified to answer, the overwhelming consensus was that their figures had been accurate. At St James Cowley we learn that 'the returns of the attendance at Church were pretty accurate. They were taken by the Churchwardens under my own

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326 Nigel Yates, 'Victorian Church Attendance: the Local Evidence', in John Webb, Nigel Yates, and Sarah Peacock, (eds.), *Hampshire Studies ... presented to Dorothy Dymond* (Portsmouth: Portsmouth City Records Office, 1981), p. 225.

327 Horace Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London,* 18 (1855), pp. 141–48; Mann refuted most of these criticisms.

328 On the usefulness of the data see B.I. Coleman, 'Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship, 1851', *Southern History,* 5 (1983); Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, pp. 424–30; and John Elliott, 'It's all a Question of Numbers', *Ecclesiology Today,* 37 (2006); on potential problems see David M. Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities', *Victorian Studies,* 11/1 (1967); W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census: a Useless Experiment?', *British Journal of Sociology,* 18 (1967); for a discussion on Oxford returns in particular see Tiller, *Church and Chapel*, pp. xvii–xix.

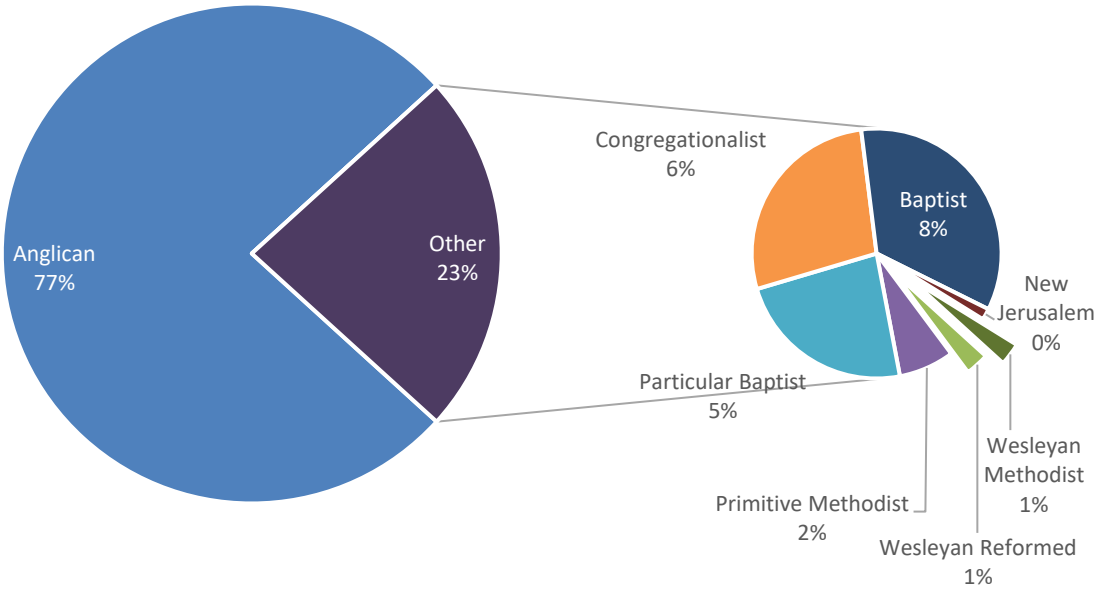
supervision';[329] and at St Mary Oxford that 'we counted our own congregation simply as it happened to be on the day specified. I am not aware that any pains were taken to increase it for the occasion.'[330] Jacob Ley, minister at St Mary Magdalen, observed that 'I made a return, by guess, of our numbers'.[331] For Wilberforce, this information led him to take far more seriously the numbers from his diocese, although he continued to dismiss the figures from dissenters as 'utterly fallacious'.[332]

Irrespective of these concerns, the census remains today one of the most useful and important statistical descriptions of religious activity in nineteenth-century England, and is a key resource for measuring details on churchgoing, church accommodation, and the relative size of denominations.[333] In 1851 the breakdown of sittings in Oxford was overwhelmingly Anglican (Graph 4-6, p. 302), with 77%.[334] This was far higher than the national average of 52%,[335] and significantly higher than the 62.7% of Anglican sittings in Oxfordshire.[336] On average, dissenting places of worship in the parishes under review had more than adequate seating: their chapels were 46% full

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329 VR 1854, St James Cowley.
330 VR 1854, St Mary Oxford.
331 VR 1854, St Mary Magdalen.
332 Wilberforce did not contest the actual numbers, but noted that an expectation for regular church attendance was considerably higher in dissenting churches than in the Church of England, and so membership of their churches could not be extrapolated in the same way as for Anglican attendance, see Wilberforce, *1854 Charge*, pp. 40–41; see also Mann's interpretation that Wilberforce had capitulated on his criticism of the census in Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', p. 145.
333 Callum G. Brown, 'Patterns of Religious Adherence', in *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 43.
334 Seating capacity is discussed in chapter five from p. 317.
335 Calculated from figures in Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', p. 148.
336 The only two counties with a higher percentage of Anglican sittings were Herefordshire and Rutland; see Tiller, *Church and Chapel*, p. xxvii.

Graph 4-6 Seating capacity of Oxford's churches: 1851 religious census

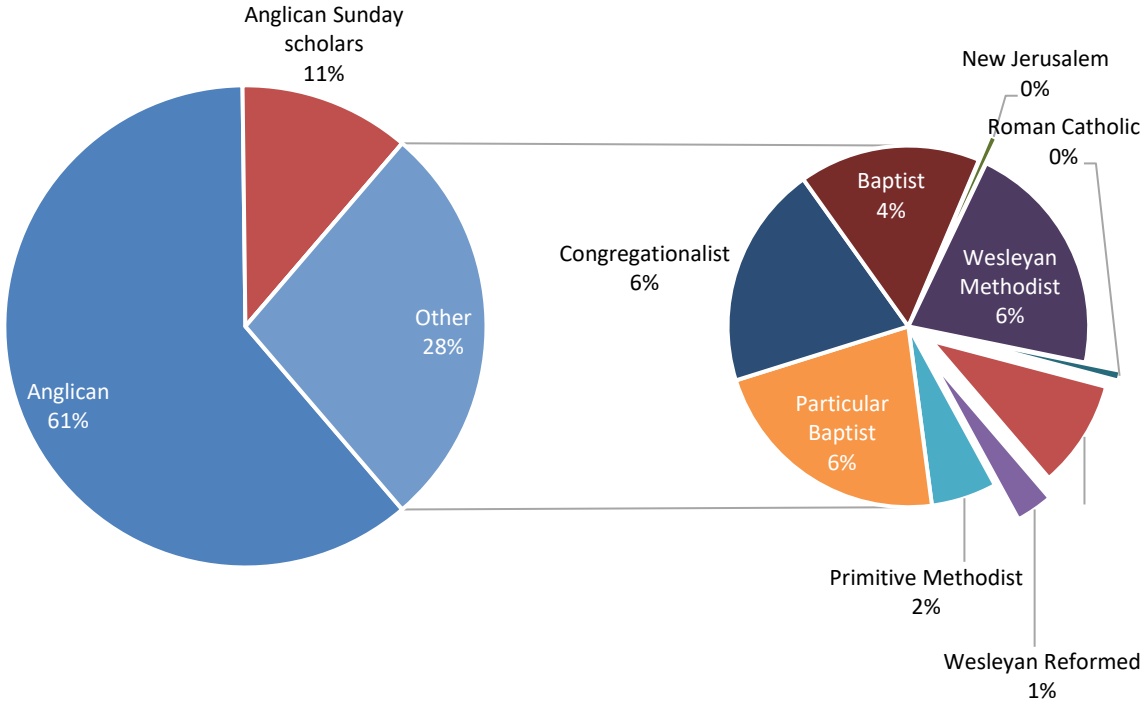


in the morning, 16% in the afternoon, and 54% in the evening. These percentages include sittings in a church that did not list a morning service (3 churches), afternoon service (11 churches) or an evening service (3 churches); if percentages are calculated that only include sittings in churches that were open, then churches were 50% full in the morning, 65.5% full in the afternoon and 70.6% full in the evening.

National averages of attendances at both Anglican and dissenting services were calculated to take up 47% each, with the remaining 6% comprising Roman Catholics and sectarians.[337] As with sittings, averages for Oxfordshire deviate significantly

337 Pickering, '1851 Religious Census', p. 392.

Graph 4-7 Attendances, 1851 religious census combined with Sunday scholars

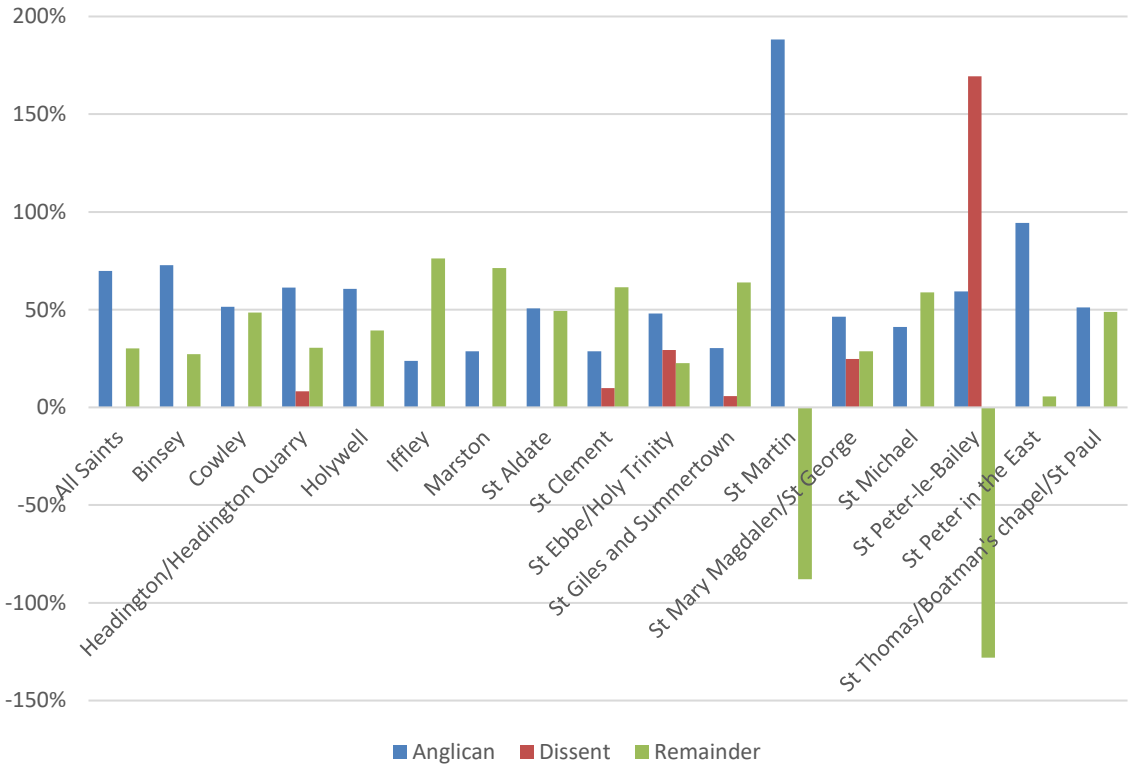


from the overall country. In Oxfordshire Sunday attendances totalled 64.3% of its population and of those attendances 62.7% were Anglican and 32.8% dissenting. In the parishes under review 21,439 attendances were recorded: 15,828 (73.8%) were at Anglican services or Sunday school, and 5,611 (26.2%) were at dissenting meetings or Sunday school (Graph 4-7).[338] As with county-wide statistics, the proportion of accommodations was reasonably close to the proportion of attendances.[339]

338 St Mary Oxford is excluded from these figures.

339 Tiller makes clear that behind the tidiness of the county-wide statistics resides considerable complexity: for details see Tiller, *Church and Chapel,* p. xxvii, ff.

Graph 4-8 Anglican and Protestant nonconformity within parish population, 1851 religious census



In Oxfordshire dissent was concentrated in larger parishes and in urban areas,[340] and data for Oxford mostly conform to this trend. Dissenting places of worship were not distributed evenly across the parishes, and 11 parishes had no meeting houses at all. Graph 4-8 plots, as a percentage, three different values for each parish: Anglican attendances, dissenting attendances, and a count of the remaining parish population once the first two figures have been subtracted. Evidence of the widespread practice of people attending places of worship from outside their parish is especially clear in St Martin and St Peter-le-Bailey, where attendances outstripped parish numbers entirely. (This explains the negative values in those parishes.) The greatest concentration of nonconformity was in the parish of St Peter-le-Bailey, within which

340 *ibid.*, p. xxxii.

were New Road Baptist Church, Wesley Memorial Church, and Adullum Chapel. Together with the nearby parishes of St Ebbe and St Mary Magdalen, dissenting services were almost entirely taking place in the city centre, with residents from neighbouring parishes having to travel into the city.

Conclusion

Two key issues that the Church had to address during the nineteenth century were its need for more room, and its vulnerability to transitioning from the national church to a protestant denomination among others. In this chapter it is clear that considerable effort was exerted by Oxford's clergy to tackle these concerns, especially in the second half of the century.

Alongside the addition of 17 new church buildings, of which most reflected contemporary ideals of church design, there was a proliferation of lower status places such as mission halls and rooms that strategically targeted Oxford's poorer inhabitants unfamiliar with Church culture. A paucity of records makes these places more difficult to examine, but at the two places where this was possible a level of adaptability and inventiveness was evident.

The place of worship was an important component of Oxford's religiosity, and their visibility and access reflected the goals and aspirations of their ministers and congregations. Within the Church the need for the church building to properly reflect its distinctive Englishness drew the clergy in Oxford to favour new gothic designs being promoted in contemporary publications and scholarship from the 1830s on. Nonconformist ministers struggled to secure a firm foothold within Oxford, and having a chapel that reflected a suitable degree of status and permanence seemed an

expensive but necessary path that helped establish them within Oxford's historic streetscape as suitable religious alternatives.

The 1851 census return provides a mid-century snapshot of the city's religious composition, where the Church predominated. In the following chapter the visitation returns will be more heavily drawn upon to examine in closer detail what took place within these buildings.

5: The parishioners and their service

In chapter two the parochial system was seen to rest upon the principle that a minister was especially responsible for the spiritual provision of each individual residing within his parish's boundary: the parishioner. In chapter three it was argued that a change in how clergy were selected and appointed led to an increase in ministers who lived out their ministerial duties with greater commitment and presence within their parish and the wider Oxford community. The nexus around which this was most publicly made visible was the parish's church buildings. Chapter four examined these structures, and evaluated how the clergy in this review, in competition with other religious ministers, treated and created these spaces to ensure that there was sufficient room of a suitable aesthetic in which God could be appropriately worshipped and taught.

This chapter evaluates, where possible, service participation in Oxford over the century by establishing church capacity and service provision, communicant

numbers, and congregation sizes. Numbers concerning communion are available for most of the century, but church attendance information is only available from 1838, and statistical data from 1838–69. The general consensus of this detailed analysis of the figures in the returns is that over the second half of the century service participation rose at a higher rate than population growth.

Accuracy

It seems reasonable to treat with confidence visitation return data on biographical details, and church buildings and fabric: notes on buildings can be corroborated with other sources as well as viewing the building today, and, where biographical information does not match details in *Crockfords* and other secondary source resources, it is reasonable, at least in the first instance, to treat visitation returns as a primary source.

With the visitation return data considered in this chapter, however, their accuracy demands special scrutiny. In evaluating the quality of the data, the contents of the visitation returns can be compared with the 1851 religious census and religious details from parliamentary reports and enquiries. In these instances, the most usual arrangement was for the incumbent or officiating minister to oversee and take responsibility for the information in the returns. What is clear is that the process by which numbers were obtained for the 1851 census was not notably different from how numbers were calculated for the visitation returns.

No other census of the nation such as the 1851 religious census was conducted again, but the information from the visitation returns does provide data that can be interpreted longitudinally, and it is not unreasonable to treat information from them

with the same degree of certainty as other sources similarly compiled. Furthermore, referring to complementary data from other censuses and surveys is crucial to understanding Victorian religion at a grassroots level.[1]

While ministers were ultimately responsible for completing the returns, their answers make it clear that many did so with the assistance of their churchwardens and other helpers. In 1866 Christopher apologized for a delay in his responses, noting that he was waiting for the return of staff in order to more accurately record certain figures.[2] For others, the visitation returns were treated as the work of the whole parish. At Holywell, for example, the parish magazine noted that 'the Clergy will be very grateful if the Parishioners would assist them by such information as they are able to give in returning true and full answers'.[3] In order to determine the number of services that had been provided at Binsey previous to his incumbency, the minister consulted the parish's oldest inhabitants for details.[4]

The questions were sent to ministers because the bishops considered the minister of the parish the most suitable and best qualified individual capable of providing accurate answers. A natural concern today is that ministers may have purposely changed data or omitted compromising details in order to present themselves more

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1 Nigel Yates, 'Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence, 1850–1900', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, Studies in Church History, 16 (Oxford, 1979), p. 396.

2 VR 1866, St Aldate.

3 'The Bishop's Visitation', *Holywell Parish Magazine* (March 1875).

4 VR 1814, Binsey.

favourably to the person with authority over them.[5] Certainly bishops of the time were mindful of this possibility: Bishop William Jones of St David noted, after presiding over five visitations, that while returns could never be absolutely accurate, with error landing 'a little on the side of exaggeration', any such overestimations diverged negligibly from what was actually taking place: ultimately the returns yielded 'hard facts'.[6] That ministers exaggerated successes and understated difficulties in the parish is today taken for granted, but without much direct evidence.[7] For Field, that ministers succumbed to the temptation of distorting reports to seem more successful was 'inevitable'.[8] Obelkevich observes that [for the 1851 census] return numbers were 'clearly estimates — rounded figures — and clearly too high', but does not consider it necessary to provide evidence of this statement.[9] In her work on Georgian returns, Jago writes that 'Some of the clergy — perhaps a majority — may have wanted to put themselves forward in the most flattering light so as to be recognized for doing their jobs well.'[10] For the clergy at Ripon in 1858 Royle rather playfully notes that 'only eleven were brave enough to admit that they [Sunday service attendees] were diminishing', but provides no

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5 Black notes that 'returns were of course transactions between unequals in which the clergy sought to present a good account of themselves', Jeremy Black, *Journal of the Society of Archivists,* 21/1 (2000), p. 137 [review of *The Eighteenth-Century Church in Yorkshire: Archbishop Drummond's Primary Visitation of 1764* and *Archbishop Drummond's Visitation Returns, 1764*, vol. 2].

6 William Basil Jones, 'The Church in Wales: Discussion', *CC* (1889), p. 176 [bishop, St David]; there were also factors that might tempt a clergyman to reduce numbers, see Robert Currie, Alan D. Gilbert, and Lee S. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 16.

7 See for example Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xxiv.

8 Field, Clive D., 'A Godly People? Aspects of Religious Practice in the Diocese of Oxford, 1738–1936', *Southern History,* 14 (1992), pp. 49.

9 Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, p. 153.

10 Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 13.

evidence that Bishop Bickersteth was either so fearsome or unreasonable that his clergy were being intimidated into answering questions on congregation sizes duplicitously.[11] In any case, if a bishop, for whatever reason, was displeased with a minister, it remained very difficult, and almost prohibitively expensive, to remove him from his parish.

Wilberforce would have been as aware as any other bishop of the degree to which information from returns could be trusted, and he consistently used information from them to establish and interpret what was happening in his diocese. Clearly, he considered the information to be as reliable as any other available source, despite explicitly acknowledging that some answers were imperfect, and that complete accuracy was not possible.[12] Bagot drew data from the visitation returns to form statistical analysis from 1834, but it was Wilberforce who took proactive steps to ensure that data provided in the returns would be as reliable and accurate as possible. One key step was to ensure that ministers answered all the questions provided; incomplete returns were no longer accepted. At the start of the century it had been permissible for clergy to submit returns that were mostly blank, except for a sentence stating that nothing had changed since the previous submission.[13] Under Wilberforce, replies with one or two unanswered questions were returned with a letter requiring the form to be properly completed and sent back. In 1860, for

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11 Royle, *Bishop Bickersteth's Visitation Returns*, p. xxx.

12 'The Bishop of Oxford's Visitation, 1866: a Statistical Abstract', OHC, Oxf. dioc. papers, c.332 [by John Davenport], fol. 20v.

13 See for example VR 1805, St Ebbe; VRs 1811, Binsey and St Mary Magdalen; and VR 1823, Marston, where most answers are blank, with a note 'it is unnecessary to repeat those Answers' as not much had changed since the previous visitation.

example, Wilberforce's office mailed printed notes to clergy who failed adequately to complete the form, demanding that they supply the necessary numbers.[14] The fact that such a close eye was kept on the data helps us infer or qualify their reliability today.

It is also worth noting that, while misleading or exaggerated answers from a remote parish might have passed unnoticed, the bishops of Oxford frequently visited the churches in and around Oxford. Furthermore, in the parishes under review, many of the clergy were part of the bishop's network, and unusual or suspicious replies may have been more easily noticed and followed up. A closer relationship with the bishop might also mean that clergy felt it appropriate to omit things if they had already spoken to the bishop about them. This was sometimes stated in the returns., as for example in an 1805 visitation where a minister wrote: 'I think it unnecessary to enter more fully with this and some other Queries, as the circumstances of the Curacy must already be sufficiently known to your Lordship'.[15] There are numerous examples where a minister adds a reminder to the bishop that their answer to a visitation question was something that had previously been brought to his attention.

Far from ministers being tempted to adjust numbers to cast them in a better light, the visitation returns include a plethora of examples that explicitly do the opposite. It is clear that many ministers took the virtue of truth-telling seriously, were open with their superior about their failings and inadequacies, and did their best to ensure the

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14 See for example correspondence filed with VR 1860, St Clement; VR 1860, Summertown; and VR 1860, Binsey.

15 VR 1805, St James Cowley.

returns accurately reflected the state of their parish. There are many instances of ministers recording figures, sometimes apologetically, sometimes self-deprecatingly, and sometimes in a very matter-of-fact way, that reflected negatively on their parochial duties. Frequently, ministers laid the blame on themselves. Richard Hales wrote that 'my discouragements are few and are traceable solely to my shortcomings and imperfect discharge of my duty', a concern repeated three and six years later.[16] Ministers were certainly willing to include themselves as part of what was hindering the work of the church in their parish, listing their 'slothfulness'[17] 'indolence',[18] poor preaching skills,[19] or inability to preach extempore.[20]

The practice of self-examination was raised several times by Wilberforce in his first episcopal charge at Oxford as a necessary discipline for clergy cultivating a suitable temperament and biblical discernment,[21] and it was a religious discipline encouraged by a spate of publications in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.[22] On the one hand self-critical comments suggest a willingness by clergy to share their faults; on the other hand a readiness for self-deprecation could be viewed as a virtue, as in Wilberforce's 1857 charge, where he approvingly quoted several such examples as evidence of clergy 'growing in the graces'.[23] Probably the answers reflect both these

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16 VRs 1854, 1857, and 1860, St Martin.
17 VR 1860, SS Mary and Nicholas.
18 VR 1890, St Giles.
19 VR 1890, Cowley St John
20 VR 1857, Holywell St Cross.
21 Wilberforce, *1848 Charge*, pp. 6, 17, 29.
22 Andrew Atherstone, 'The Undergraduate Diary of Francis Chavasse, 1865–1868', in Mark Smith and Stephen Taylor, (eds.), *Evangelicalism in the Church of England, c.1790–c.1890: a Miscellany* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004) [with introduction], p. 122, see also n. 67 for a sample list of pubns.
23 Wilberforce, *1857 Charge*, p. 16.

elements: the returns are not just a source of enumerative data; they are nuanced documents that benefit from careful reading.

One thing the visitation returns made clear is that clergy in Oxford worked in often challenging environments and with much expected of them, and the responses reveal the anxieties and self-doubts that some of them faced. The great strain imposed on the incumbent was accepted as being one of the drawbacks of the parochial system, especially in the city.[24] For some, the physical exertion the job demanded was felt at times to be too much.[25] Others experienced anxiety due to moving into a parish that had been well managed by a more experienced predecessor, as with Henry Squires, who, having taken over at St Peter-le-Bailey from the charismatic and popular preacher Francis Chavasse, noted rather forlornly that he was both a 'less popular and gifted man'.[26] Devotional texts might celebrate inadequacy, treating it either as a necessary step, or a virtue to be cultivated, as part of becoming a more effective agent of God. But for some ministers at least, for better or for worse, a sense of insufficiency to do the job was a prevailing concern, and they did not hesitate to include in their returns answers that put them in a compromising light.

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24 David E.H. Mole, 'Challenge to the Church: Birmingham, 1815–65', in H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, (eds.), *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 832.

25 VR 1890, Iffley; the minister, Horatio Walmisley, was 67 at the time.

26 VR 1893, St Peter-le-Bailey; on Chavasse see J.B. Lancelot and I.T. Foster (rev.), 'Chavasse, Francis James', in *ODNB* [online edn, September 2004; accessed 27 May 2018].

In view of the foregoing, the visitation return numbers in this chapter are treated as being more likely accurate than not, and, where discrepancies emerge, explanations beyond an assumption of intentional inaccuracy are sought.

Church capacity

Instances of a minister recording, with apparent indifference, low congregation numbers, and so a surplus of church sittings, are rare but do exist. In 1811, for example, William Hanbury reported that services on holy days were provided only 'when a congregation can be obtained';[27] and in 1814 the incumbent at Marston justified providing single duty only by insufficient demand, noting that this had been the case for at least the past 50 years.[28] A note in 1854 that congregation numbers at Carfax could only be obtained from evening weekday services, however, is stated alongside an assurance that the church nevertheless remained well attended, and that 'as far as numbers are concerned I have nothing to complain of.'[29]

The inverse of this problem, however, that there was not enough room to seat people, is reported frequently and arose in all the visitations. Although population growth in Oxford was less than in northern industrial towns, over the century clergy in this review consistently reported struggling to accommodate churchgoers owing to insufficient room. In 1821 the incumbent wrote that St Andrew Headington was

> much too small to accommodate the number of Parishioners who would wish to attend Divine Services with seats — that there have been large galleries erected

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27 VR 1811, St Ebbe.
28 VR 1814, Marston St Nicholas.
29 VR 1854, St Martin Carfax.

> within these few years, which are completely filled and that the Chancel is full of Pews even up to the Altar.[30]

A few years later a similar observation was made by the Vestry of St Ebbe to justify adding a gallery on the north side of the church, noting that 'the sittings in the church are inadequate to the accommodation of more than one fourth of the Parishioners and that consequently many persons are prevented from attending Divine Worship at their Parish church'.[31] In 1854 St Mary Iffley was 'frequently [in] want of room' and in 1860 St John Summertown was 'full and increasingly so'.[32] At St Aldate in 1862 the church was regularly full, with the poor telling its churchwardens that 'when we do go to church we do not know where to sit'.[33] When Francis Kilvert visited a mid-week 8:00 pm service at St Barnabas in 1880 he wrote that 'the large Church was almost full, the great congregations singing like one man.' [34] St Barnabas seated about 1,200 people, and four years later it was still being noted as 'nearly always crowded'.[35] In 1882 clergy at SS Philip and James were turning away 50–100 people each Sunday morning.[36]

Calculating how many people can be seated in a church is not an objective exercise, and in this study it is common for records of a church's seating capacity to fluctuate up or down by around 20%. With no church reordering taking place, for example, the

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30 Thomas Whorwood, LPL ICBS 361: letter to ICBS, 18 Dec 1821, f. 1.

31 'Order of Vestry for erecting a gallery', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers c 2170 no. 9: copy of vestry minutes held 3 May 1827.

32 VR 1854, St Mary Iffley; VR 1860, St John Summertown.

33 A.M.W. Christopher, LPL, ICBS 5904: letter to secretary of the Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement ... of Churches, 28 Feb 1862, f. 1.

34 Kilvert, *Kilvert's Diary, 1870–1879,* p. 316 [entry for 24 May 1876].

35 Bassett, *S. Barnabas', Oxford: a Record of Fifty Years*, p. 47.

36 Frederick John Brown, LPL, ICBS 8772: letter to Rev. R. Milburn Blakiston, 16 Oct 1882.

capacity at St John the Baptist Summertown between 1838 and 1854 was recorded variously as 420, 400, and 384 people. In 1858, following work extending the church the year before, Edward Palin reported an increase in sittings but provided the lowest figure yet, noting the church now held 371 people, with 140 appropriated seats and room for 173 free adults and 58 free children.[37] When the Iron Church opened in 1860, with open seating, it was described as accommodating 'between 300 and 400 people' but without an exact figure.[38] At St Giles it was noted that 50 people above its capacity were often accommodated, but only 'with great pressure'.[39]

The standard set by the ICBS was to allow 20 inches for adults and 14 inches for children, but in applications for grants from churches in this review it was common to use narrower dimensions. At St Aldate in 1862, for example, widths of 20, 19, 18, and 17.4 inches were applied to different benches intended for adults in order to reach an acceptable number of seats.[40] These calculations could make a deep impact on an attendee's experience of a service: at St John the Baptist Summertown the decision to narrow the seating space in order to have wider aisles was greatly

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37 Sources are 1) VR 1838, St John the Baptist Summertown (420 people); 2) and 3) 1851 religious census and church certificate to ICBS (400 people); 4) Application for aid towards the increase of accommodation', 27 Feb 1854 (384 people); ICBS 4752 (b); and 5) ICBS 4752; letter 30 March 1858 from incumbent Edward Palin to ICBS (371 people).

38 Diocesan Calendar 1860, p. 96.

39 G.M. Bullock, LPL, ICBS 5552: letter to secretary ICBS, 15 March 1860. Seating capacity in dissenting places of worship was equally unclear. On the Sunday of the 1851 religious census the minister of the New Road Baptist Chapel was absent, and in this confusion two returns were submitted for the same chapel. The minister Edward Bryan reported that New Road Baptist Chapel had 650 seats, while his deacon John Alden counted 33% more, with 800 seats.

40 Christopher, A.M.W., LPL, ICBS 5904 (b) Form A, 1862: St Aldate.

regretted, as 'the seats were so high and so narrow that it was all but impossible for anyone to kneel and very uncomfortable for anyone to sit'.[41]

Other variables make numbers on seating capacity still more ambiguous. In the parishes under review, the majority did not include seats for Sunday scholars when counting sittings.[42] This practice sheds light on how clergy interpreted and used this measure: unless explicitly directed otherwise, church capacity described the number of adults that could be accommodated, not the number of people. At St Aldate, for example, its increase in capacity in 1862 from 457 to 534 people is accounted for by the inclusion of children's benches.[43] Another factor affecting capacity was that newly-built churches were often used for some time before the work was completed and full capacity reached. At its consecration in 1883, St Margaret North Oxford seated only 190 people, and it was not until 1893 that it reached its capacity of 680 people.[44] Likewise, at SS Mary and John the church in 1879 held space for only 50 chairs (although communicant numbers were often higher than 50): it operated at that capacity until 1883.[45]

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41 ICBS 4752 (b) 'Application for aid towards the increase of accommodation', 27 Feb 1854.

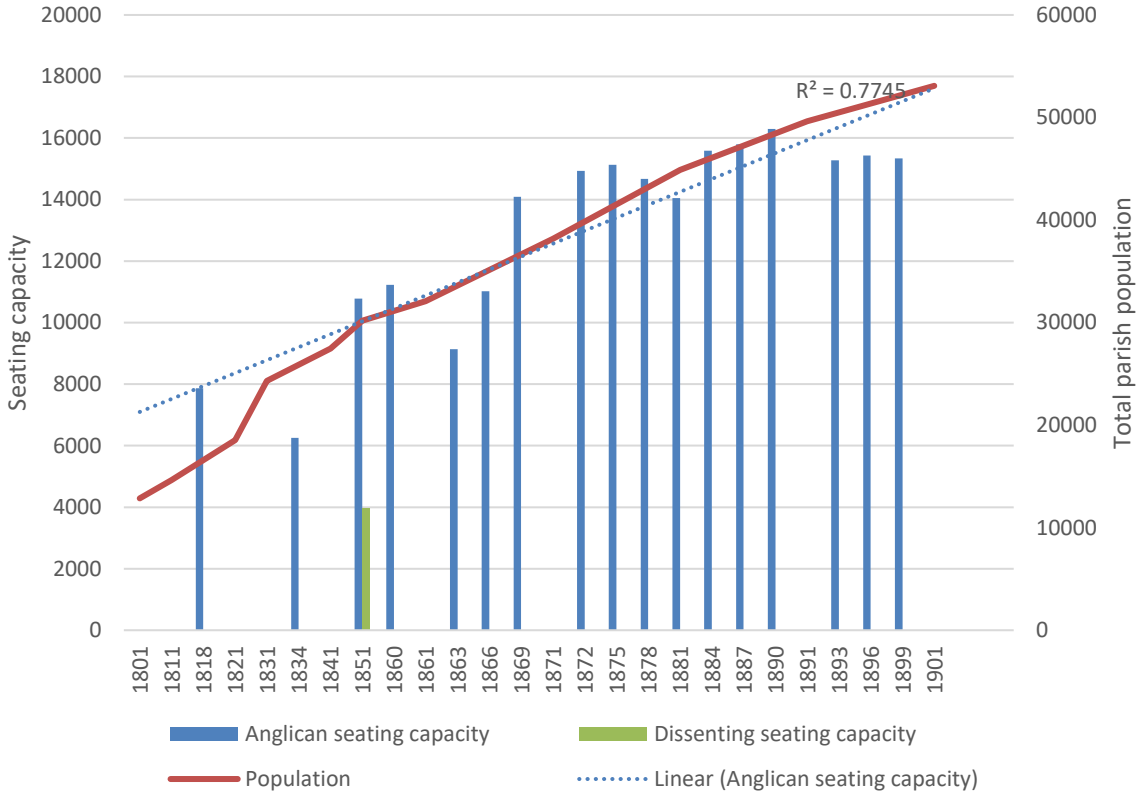
42 Forms submitted to the ICBS required this breakdown.

43 In completed ICBS Form A the seats for children were included, but numbers submitted in these forms often erred on the lower side, as grants were assessed in part on the degree of need in each submission. In an 1862 letter to ICBS from St Aldate, for example, the total seating is given as 457 (422 pews and 35 free); but in Form A for ICBS the total is given as 534, including 70 children not counted in the first correspondence.

44 It was decided to build the church in sections, see F.J. Brown, LPL, ICBS 8772 (c): letter to ICBS, 4 December 1884; see also 'St Margaret's Church', *JOJ* (13 October 1883).

45 'New District Church at Cowley', *JOJ* (15 Oct 1881). From 1879 to 1883 the chancel area of the otherwise unfinished church of SS Mary and John was put into use: in 1881 it was used for three Sunday services and at Easter there were 77 communicants, despite there being only 50 chairs.

Graph 5-1 Seating capacity vs. population, 1801–1901



With these caveats in mind, Graph 5-1 charts as accurately as possible the total seating capacity of all the churches in this review over the century. The only visitation to ask directly for church capacity was in 1834,[46] and the other data are taken from a parliamentary return 1818, the 1851 religious census, Wilberforce's 1860 parochial survey, and diocesan returns as printed in the annual *Oxford Diocesan Calendar* for the years of each visitation from 1860 on.[47]

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46 Two churches (St Mary Oxford, and St Peter-le-Bailey) did not answer this question and the 1834 visitation return for St John the Baptist Summertown is missing.

47 *Accounts of Population of Benefices or Parishes, and Capacity of Churches and Chapels, in England and Wales* (1818); VR 1834 (all); Tiller, *Church and Chapel*; and Wilberforce, 'Records of the Diocese', OHC, MS Oxf. dioc. papers b.70: bound scrapbook, 1860; ODC, 1860–99; various ICBS records; population figures from census returns *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 1.

The figures indicate that between 1818 and 1899 the number of Anglican spaces (Graph 5-1, left axis) roughly doubled from 8,000 to 16,000. This increase mostly follows population growth (Graph 5-1, right axis), and through most of the century Oxford's Anglican churches could hold about a third of the city's population in a single sitting. From a purely mathematical perspective, if every church had provided three Sunday services with seating available to all there would have been adequate provision for every parishioner to attend one Sunday service.

As discussed in chapter four, the 1851 religious census provides a useful mid-point in this study to measure church use versus available capacity. In the 1851 census St Peter-le-Bailey was the only Anglican church in this review holding services that were more than 80% full; on average churches filled just over a third of their buildings, with 44% capacity in the morning, 29% in the afternoon, and 31.4% in the evening.[48] That these percentages of seats filled in the 1851 religious census do not align with the numerous reports across these churches that they struggled to accommodate parishioners will be considered next. Apart from building new churches, enlarging existing churches, and establishing mission halls — all discussed in chapter four — the remaining key strategies were freeing up pews and making them more available, and providing more services. These two strategies will be considered in turn.

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[48] These percentages are arrived at by including sittings in a church that did not list an afternoon service (5 churches) or an evening service (10 churches); if percentages are calculated only using sittings in churches that were running an afternoon or evening service then churches were 50% full in the afternoon and 54% full in the evening; dissenting chapels were a little more crowded, filling on average 59% of their seats each service.

Freeing up pews

For nearly all churches what denoted 'full' did not necessarily mean being at full capacity, but rather not having sufficient free or unappropriated seating for the parish's labouring classes. With only a few exceptions, the need for more seating was a problem for the lower orders and the poor.[49] At St Aldate, for example, the rector anticipated the problem that 'if many more poor come there will then be … too small a number of free sittings'.[50] At St Mary Magdalen in 1854 the minister noted on church attendance that 'church rather full; as full as a *pewed* church is ever likely to be'.[51] At St Cross Holywell the minister noted that 'Church is appropriate and parcelled out to an actual minority, the well-to-do, college servants, and tradesmen: and the attendance of these is irregular; especially in term time'.[52]

At the start of the nineteenth century, in churches in this review, it was common to reserve a portion of seats for nominated parishioners, either without charge by appropriation or through a rental arrangement, usually paid quarterly. Efforts to stop this custom led to the practice declining over the course of the century; Cambridge Camden Society founder J.M. Neale considered the pew system to be 'the intrusion of human pride, and selfishness, and indolence … into the worship of God'.[53] In nearly all instances the justification for reform was that it discriminated against

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49 SS Philip and James was built from a demand for more pews at St Giles, but when opened all seats were free and unappropriated.

50 VR 1860, St Aldate.

51 VR 1854, St Mary Magdalen, his emphasis.

52 VR 1866, St Cross Holywell.

53 J.M. Neale, *The History of Pews*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: University Press, 1842), p. 3.

the poorer classes and so weakened the parochial system:

> Because to allot to a *few families* what belongs to *all* is contrary to the Parochial System and the Common Law, by which the seats in every parish church are 'for the *free* use in *common*' of *all* the parishioners.[54]

At Oxford the issue of class was central to arguments against pews; it drew 'special attention to the failure of the English Church in drawing together the lower and lower middle class within its fold … the selfish system of exclusiveness … If we wanted a Church of the Upper Classes, then continue the present system'.[55] Pew rents and appropriated seats were not the only reasons for the poorer classes not attending church, but they were regularly identified as the major contributor: 'a running sore, eating out the very life of the Church',[56] and 'the main cause of the alienation of the people from the Church, and therefore the cause of Dissent, of irreligion, of all the moral and social evils'.[57]

By 1866 reports from the Oxford Free and Open Church Association noted that working-class people were starting to resent being relegated to the back seats, especially 'that great and rising class of mechanics and well-paid workmen who are fast becoming a most powerful political agency'.[58] Even when a church was significantly altered to accommodate free sittings the church's interior could continue to map out class division. In the floorplan of St Aldate for example (Image 5-1,[59] p.

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54 *Twenty-Four Reasons Against Appropriation-to-a-Tenth, Commonly Called the 'Pew System', in Churches* (London: Free and Open Church Society 1880), p. 2, his emphasis.

55 'Oxford Free and Open Church Association', *OC* (17 March 1866).

56 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.

57 Herford, 'Means of Recovering the Alienated Classes: Free and Open Churches', p. 174

58 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866).

59 John W. Christopher, LPL, ICBS 5954: detail of St Aldate ground plan, 1863 [shading added].

Image 5-1 Detail of St Aldate ground plan, 1863 [green shading indicates free seating, red the communion table, and purple the pulpit]



323), the newly opened up free sittings (shaded green) were allocated to the parts of the church with worst visibility of the pulpit and communion table (shaded purple and red). Apart from limiting the seating capacity, the pew system raised other concerns. At St Thomas, Chamberlain's attempts in the mid-1840s to lower pews and remove their doors created sufficient disturbance amongst some of the parishioners that Bishop Wilberforce met with Chamberlain and seven of the parish's leading rate payers to help mediate. Apart from want of room, Chamberlain was concerned that the young people 'took advantage of the concealment' of the high pews to disturb worship, such that the young females of the parish felt not able to attend because of their 'abominable conduct'.[60]

In 1844 St Peter-le-Bailey became the first Oxford church to make all its seats free and unappropriated (a claim applied, incorrectly, to SS Philp and James at its consecration in 1862.)[61] Its Tractarian rector W.B. Heathcote defended the move under the principle that 'the poorest should each have a place as convenient as possible, but that the richest should have not better'.[62]

In 1851, of the Anglican churches in this review 49.6% of the pews were free, and along with St Peter-le-Bailey only three other churches had no system of appropriation at all: the Boatman's Chapel (discussed above, p. 258), Holy Trinity

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60 'Saint Thomas's Church', *OC* (24 October 1846), p. 2; it is likely that Chamberlain's observation at this meeting that he had 'sometimes thought it were better that young women should stay away from the service' was offered better to justify his campaign to replace all pews with free and open sittings.

61 'The New Church of St Philip and St James', *JOJ* (17 May 1862), p. 5.

62 W.B. Heathcote, Bodl., G.A. Oxon b.113: printed letter to parishioners of St Peter-le-Bailey, 18 December 1844.

Headington Quarry, where ill-feeling in the parish would have made fees unworkable, and St George, a chapel of ease in St Mary Magdalen. At St George, from the beginning the intention was for the entire chapel to be free, with 370 free sittings and 80 seats for children.[63] That all its seats were free, however, was used by the mother church in 1849 to justify reducing free seats; at first 525 seats were appropriated for 75 families, and by 1862 only 5 free benches remained.[64]

In new churches pew rents were sometimes a way of raising funds to make the church self-sustaining. At St Paul the minister, along with 'endowment secured by contribution', was to be maintained by pew rents,.[65] It was to seat 866 people , of which 718 were free, and 148 rented.[66] In some of its pews a family with servants would pay for seven seats, and some pews were shared with two couples to make four places, but in any given year income from only about half the available sittings would be collected.[67] From its construction up to 1848, the churchwardens never managed to rent all its 22 pews, and on average two or three pews remained empty.[68] How these unappropriated rental pews were used is clear from one person's account

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63 ICBS 4140 St George the Martyr, application form B.

64 'New Chapel of Ease, St Mary Magdalene, Oxford', LPL, ICBS 4140: circular requesting subscriptions, 14 May 1849; 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866); Charles C. Clerke, LPL, ICBS 4140: Form B, 14 April 1849 has a record of St Mary Magdalen having 150 free sittings, but the 1862 floor plan shows only 5 free benches, see 'St Mary Magdalen Church', OHC, PAR 208/11/Y1/9: plan of pews, 1862.

65 Charles Carr Clerke, 'Application ... for Aid Towards Building a Church in the Parish of St Thomas [St Paul's]', LPL, ICBS 1658 (B).

66 Henry Cary, 'Certificate ... and Plan of Free Seats', LPL, ICBS 1658 (F): letter to ICBS declaring St Paul's meets conditions of funding.

67 OHC, PAR 212/4/F3/1: pew rent receipt accounts, 1836–48.

68 *ibid.*.

of a service at the church:

> The Church of England being the poor man's church, I did of course expect to see all the poor people sitting in the best seats, but I was disappointed: for when any ill-clad person came in the sexton did point with his stick, which did mean that the person was to take a seat in the 'beggar's hole', but when a person did enter dressed in fine raiment, the sexton did put on a smiling countenance, and say, 'walk this way, ladies', and did walk before them and put them into a fine pew with cushions and hassocks in it.[69]

Despite having 148 rented seats, St Paul regarded itself a church 'which in every way may be said to be the Church of the Poor',[70] but over the second half of the century pew renting came to be widely criticized, and at St Paul had ceased altogether by the 1890s.[71]

Efforts to move St Giles to a free and open system began in the 1830s; at this point there were several examples of boxes that could seat eight people instead being occupied by one individual. This led to churchwardens W. Ward (later mayor of Oxford) and F.J. Morrell[72] attempting to convince the owners to make the empty seats available to others.[73] Such requests were invariably refused, depending on who was asking to be admitted; finally the churchwardens rented pews from the owners at their personal expense to make more seats available.[74] In 1834 a plan had been conceived to extend seating for the poorer parishioners by adding a new gallery,[75] but before this had been enacted the gift of a new barrel organ in 1838 resulted

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69 'Mr Pips his Diary', *OC* (30 June 1849) [on St Paul Oxford].

70 'St Paul's Church', OHC, PAR 212/11/X1/1: printed circular, October 1852.

71 'Free and Open Church Association', *JOJ* (15 December 1894).

72 Frederick Joseph Morrell (1811–83) was a member the only family to hold any prolonged influence in Oxford; see Alan Crossley, 'The City of Oxford', *A History of the County of Oxford, VCH,* 4 (1979), pp. 184–85.

73 W. Ward, 'Means of Recovering the Alienated Classes: Discussion', *CC* (1862), p. 179.

74 *ibid.*.

75 VR 1834, St Giles.

instead in all seating in the gallery being removed to make space for its installation.[76] The issue remained unresolved for another 20 years. Finally, at the invitation of Professor Burrows, St Giles held a special vestry meeting to make the church free and unappropriated, but the move was defeated by a majority of one.[77]

A strategy that had for some time been contemplated at St Aldate was for all pews for the afternoon and evening services to be unlocked and freely available.[78] In 1858 St Giles churchwarden F.J. Morrell was able to achieve a compromise by opening the church's pews in the evening only, noting that a third service at the church was introduced 'in the evening on Sundays for the accommodation of parishioners unable to have sittings assigned to them at the morning and afternoon services.'[79] This arrangement remained in place at least until the 1890s, and Morrell's action was credited with influencing several other free and unappropriated churches that were established later, including SS Philip and James, St Barnabas, and St Margaret.[80] At the first evening service in SS Philip and James in 1862 the preacher, president of St John's college, explained that the 'whole of the floor is free alike to both rich and

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76 Barrington-Ward, *Handguide to St Giles'*, p. 36.

77 Burrows recounted this episode at a meeting 40 years later: 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.

78 VR 1854, St Aldate: 'I am anxious for a rearrangement of the seats in my church, with a view to having an evening service on Sundays in addition to the present services, and should wish the sittings throughout the church to be unappropriated for the afternoon and evening services.'

79 Bullock, LPL, ICBS 5552: letter to secretary ICBS, 15 March 1860.

80 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.

poor; that they would assemble together as fellow worshippers all on an equal foot and free from any distinction'.[81]

The National Society of the Free and Open Church Association began in 1866 as a movement in Manchester, and soon found sufficient support to open branches around the country.[82] It issued a monthly magazine devoted to its causes and published editions of prize essays on the subject.[83] Free and open sittings were mostly favoured by high churchmen, although in meetings it was noted that this was 'by no means a mere High Church movement', with observations that it was supported by individuals including Lord Shaftesbury and Archdeacon Sandford, and by the *Record*.[84] By the mid-1890s the principle that pew rents could be replaced with Church rates had been abandoned: it was argued that weekly offertories were the best means by which churches could cover loss of income.[85]

The Oxford Free and Open Church Association was established in 1865, and within a year had recruited 90 members.[86] Its membership included heads of houses, professors, tutors, and undergraduates, as well as clergy and citizens.[87] They included the Sheriff of Oxford, Joseph Castle, and F.J. Morrell and membership cost 5s a year.[88] The Oxford branch identified its core aim, making church services available

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81 'The New Church of St Philip and St James', *JOJ* (17 May 1862), p. 5.
82 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866).
83 *ibid.*.
84 'Terminal Meeting of the Oxford Free and Open Society', *OT* (8 Dec 1866), p. 7.
85 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.
86 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866).
87 'Oxford Free and Open Church Association', *OUH* (17 March 1866).
88 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866).

to the poorer classes, as evangelical,[89] but the association was non-party in character and considered its non-sectarian position to be an asset that helped promote its cause.[90] Nevertheless, at society meetings it was observed that their branch mostly, but not entirely, comprised high churchmen. They hoped undergraduates would attend their meetings, so that they could disseminate the principles as they went out 'to different positions in life'.[91] The society was particularly active: three clerks were constantly employed, engaging in correspondence — sometimes up to 30 letters a day — that required considerable time and labour, as well as printing.

Even once churches became free and unappropriated, the ingrained habit of using allocated seats might persist.[92] It remained possible for people to obtain a 'pretended right to seats' by leaving books or cushions on them, and it fell to churchwardens to discourage such practices.[93] The issue was addressed in a letter to parishioners of St Peter-le-Bailey, that noted:

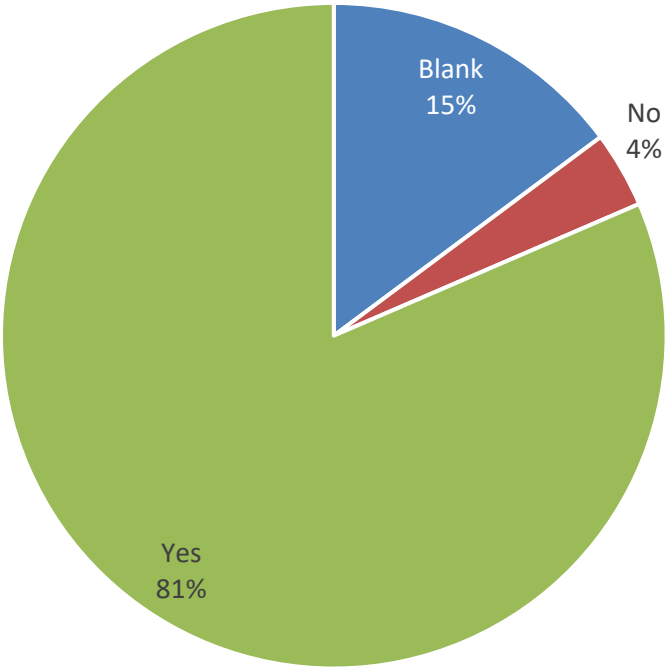
> if persons put a long cushion in a seat, the delicacy of the poor is such, that they will go elsewhere rather than seem to intrude on what is another's property, although placed where it has no right to be placed. And as these private family-cushions multiply, the poor are thrust back (as it were) inch by inch. Furthermore, the cushions are of various colours and so interfere with the general character and appearance of the sacred building. People who felt

89 'Oxford Free and Open Church Association', *OC* (17 March 1866).
90 'Report', *OC* (17 March 1866).
91 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.
92 Antonio Brady, 'Free and Open Churches: Discussion', *CC* (1869), p. 152.
93 'Free and Open Churches: Meeting at the Examination Schools', *Oxford Journal* (5 May 1894), p. 6.

that it assisted their devotion to have *one place* where they are in the habit of praying should have ensured their place by coming early instead.[94]

In the visitation returns for 1872 and 1875 only, ministers were asked whether their church was 'so arranged, that the poorer sort of people can kneel conveniently at the prayers, and can hear without difficulty'. Answers from 1872 are too few to be useful, but most churches in this review responded in 1875. Nearly every minister answered positively (Graph 5-2), although the wording of the question perhaps allowed some to interpret it as asking whether their seating was laid out

Graph 5-2 VRs 1875: Is there sufficient room for the poor to hear the service and kneel?



94 Heathcote, Bodl., G.A. Oxon b.113: printed letter to parishioners of St Peter-le-Bailey, 18 December 1844.

Table 5-1 Oxford branch of the Free and Open Church Association 1894 report on pew rents and availability

Church	Pew rents	Assigned	Church open
All Saints	No	Some assigned Sunday mornings only	Yes
Cowley	No	No	Yes
Cowley St John	No	No	Yes
Holy Trinity	162 out of 357 rented; Vicar hopes to free church shortly		
SS Philip and James	No	No	Yes
St Aldate	No	Half assigned; vicar 'to some extent in favour of pew rents'	No
St Barnabas	No	No	Yes
St Clement	No	Some assigned in chancel	No
St Cross	No	Seats assigned, but Vicar in sympathy with the Society	Yes
St Ebbe	No	Seats assigned	No
St Frideswide	No	No	Yes
St George	No	No	Yes
St Giles	No	Some assigned in east half, result of vestry meeting in 1860	Yes
St Martin	No	Some to parishioners only	No because 'noise from street is deafening'
St Mary BV	No	Some seats 'said to be locked'	Yes
St Mary Magdalen	No	Some assigned to parishioners at Sunday 11:00 only	Yes
St Matthew	300 out of 630	300 assigned; vicar of mother church St Aldate 'to some extent in favour of pew rents' but making great advances in no. of free sittings	No
St Michael	No	Some to parishioners only	Yes
St Paul	No	No	Yes
St Thomas	No	Some necessarily for schools	Yes

appropriately, and not if there was enough seating for the poor altogether. The only church to respond negatively was St John the Baptist Summertown, and the reason given seems part of an ongoing campaign by the church's incumbent to be awarded a

higher living, noting that the pew rents formed part of the 'small income for the incumbent' such that stopping them was unsustainable.[95]

In 1894 the Oxford branch of the Free and Open Church Association sent a circular to 20 of the churches in this review, asking if any seats were rented or appropriated, and if the church was open for private prayer outside service times (Table 5-1).[96] The responses demonstrate the effectiveness of the Association, as only two churches were persisting with rents, and eight churches were entirely unappropriated. Nearly all churches were open during the week, although instances such as at Holy Trinity Headington Quarry, where a person tampered with the alms box and stole some furnishings, led some ministers to stop the practice.[97]

Church services

The single cheapest way to accommodate more people was by offering additional services. This provision could potentially render unnecessary the erection of another place of worship, and the money saved could be invested in additional clergy, which was widely considered of greater practical use.[98] More frequent services were justified not only as a frugal strategy to accommodate more people: they also helped further sacralize the church structure, with every extra service helping reinforce the place of worship as the spiritual focus of the parish.

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95 VR 1875, St John the Baptist Summertown; see also VR 1854, noting that the 'insufficiency of the Minister's income' was the chief obstacle hampering his ministry; and VR 1857, where 'the smallness of the stipend (amounting from all sources to a maximum of £70 a year)', made it not possible to afford a much-needed curate.

96 'Free and Open Church Association', *JOJ* (15 December 1894).

97 VR 1899, Headington Quarry.

98 Foster, 'Use of Mission Rooms', p. 44.

Throughout the century the visitation returns required the officiating minister to list the frequency of divine service. As noted in other dioceses, questions on services were among the most consistently answered parts of a visitation return:[99] in this study 3,858 discrete entries describing a service are listed.[100] The inclusion of service details allows the identification of changes and trends covering such salient aspects of public worship as service times and frequency, the provision of sermons, and frequency of communion. The results also indicate a change in Anglican church culture, which transitioned from a general uniformity in service numbers, times, and frequency, to a range of more variable worship patterns that by the end of the century were being accepted more widely by the Clergy as legitimate and acceptable.

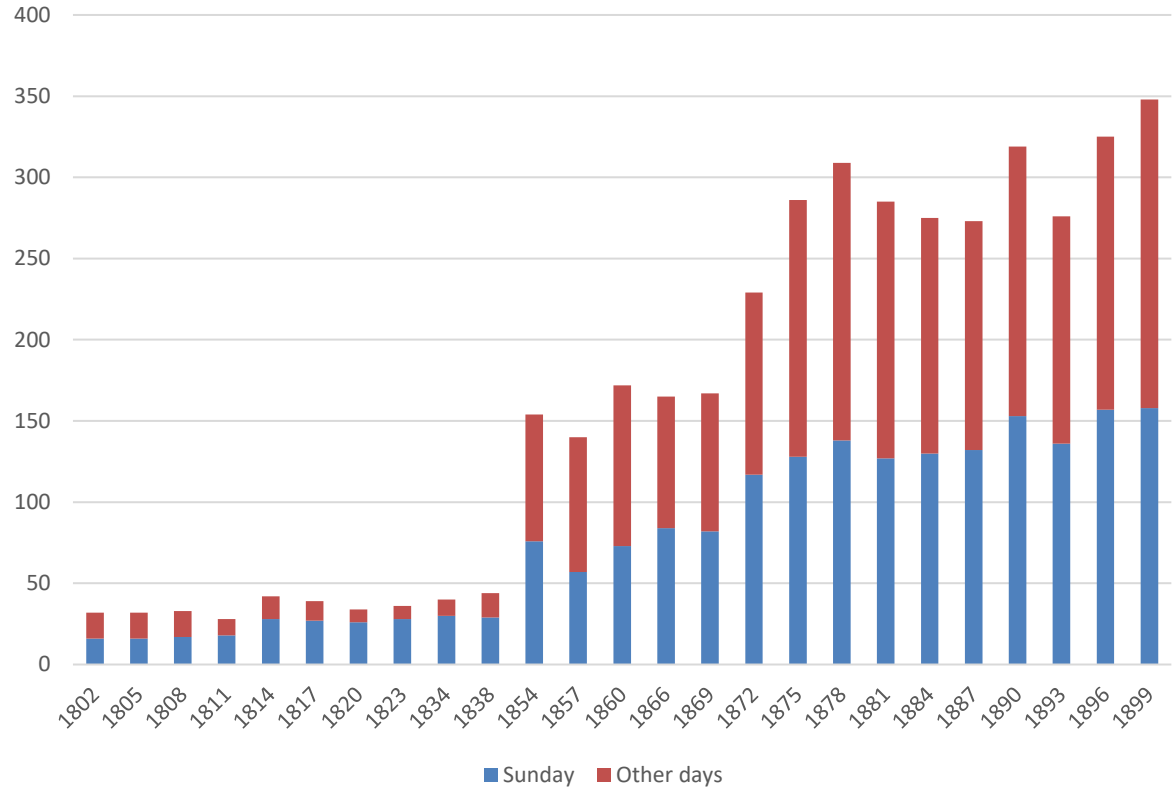
From 1802 to 1838 the pattern of Anglican service provision in Oxford was almost entirely uniform, both between churches and between visitation years. Nearly all the churches provided two Sunday services each week. Only a small number of parishes offered just one Sunday service: Binsey and Oxford St John the Baptist offered single duty for most of the century, and Marston moved from single to double duty in the 1820s. A few other churches reduced service provision in the winter, and most provided extra services on holy days, especially Easter, Christmas, Ascension Day, and Whitsunday.

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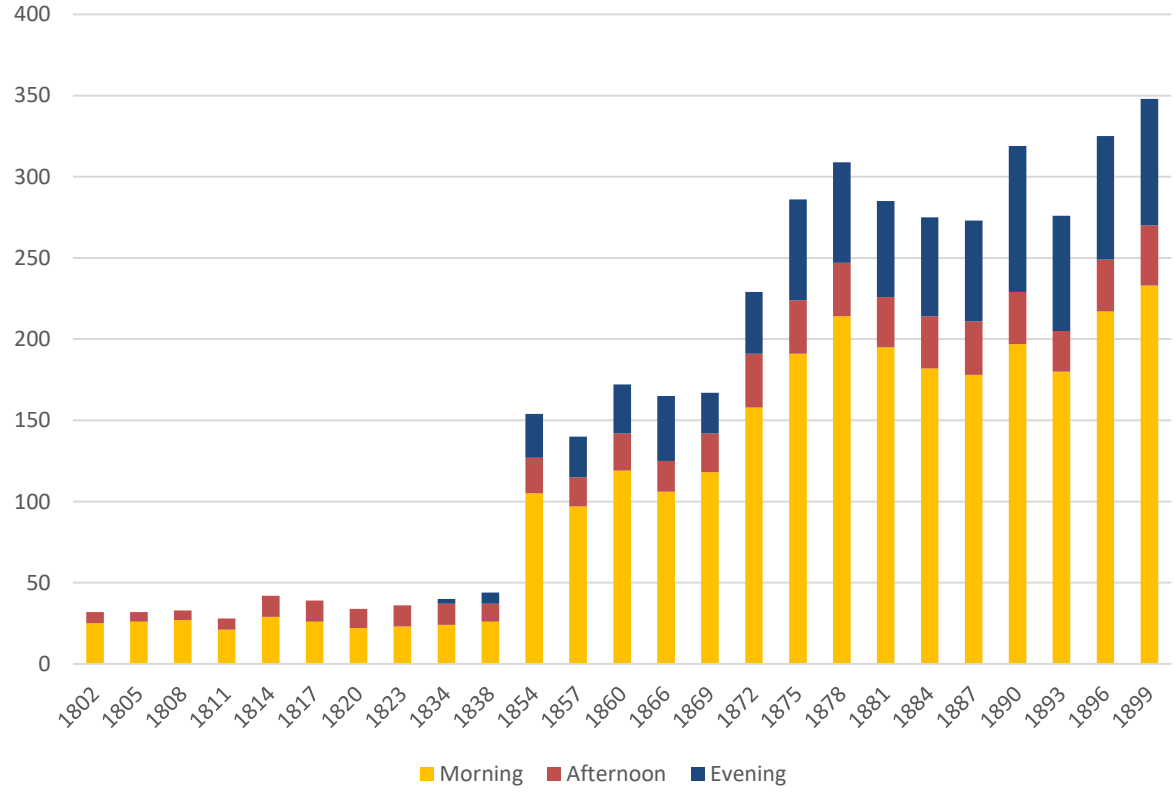
99 Burg, *Religion in Hertfordshire, 1847 to 1851*, p. xvi.

100 Counting Sunday services could be calculated differently: when communion followed matins (which may or may not have included a sermon) some ministers counted this as a single service, and other ministers counted it as two separate services. This study counts the service number by whatever system was followed at that parish.

Graph 5-3 Weekly services: Sunday vs. other days, 1802–99



Graph 5-4 Services each week: time of day, 1802–99



On average, from 1802 to 1838 a little over 32 services were conducted each week in the churches under review (Graph 5-3, p. 334). Of these 65% were held on Sunday, with nearly all remaining services held on Wednesday and/or Friday at 11:00 am. Sunday services were mostly at either 11:00 am or 3:00 pm, with more services in the morning than after midday (Graph 5-4, p. 334). A few churches had afternoon services at 4:00.[101] The misleading statement from St Martin Carfax in 1820 that it was 'almost the only church in Oxford open in the afternoon for divine service'[102] was possibly worded to help justify raising subscriptions for a new church building.

From 1802 to 1838 Sunday services included one or two sermons each week, and communion was mostly limited to a small number of holy days that always included Easter and Christmas.[103] Deviations from this pattern were minor fluctuations that did not conflict with the broader picture of homogeneity and uniformity of public worship. Alterations to established service provision were seen by ministers as highly experimental. At St Giles 1834 the minister wrote that Prayers on saints' days, Wednesdays, and Fridays had been 'attended by so very few people' that he was trialling a Friday evening service with liturgy instead; by 1838 he had returned to the more usual pattern.[104]

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101 Most churches described a service after 3:00 as an evening service, but often changed to calling them afternoon services if they instigated still later services. Except when directly quoting material, in this thesis any service starting on or before midday is described as 'morning'; services starting after midday to 4:45 pm are described as 'afternoon'; and any service starting on or after 5:00 pm is described as 'evening'.

102 Fletcher, *History of St Martin*, p. 82.

103 Sermons and communion frequency are discussed in more detail below.

104 In 1834 the minister considered it too early to determine if the change has been successful, writing that 'as far as I can judge it is highly beneficial in every respect'; VRs 1834, 1838, St Giles.

The first record of daily services in the visitation returns was in 1838 at St Mary Oxford.[105] After much deliberation the church's minister, John Henry Newman (vicar 1828–43), had introduced daily services in 1834 during the University vacation, conducting them in the chancel where he hoped potentially low attendance would avoid attracting negative responses.[106] 1838 was also the first visitation to record Sunday evening services, which in the first half of the century constituted around 2% of Sunday services; the first mid-week evening services were mentioned in 1834. Providing an evening service was more expensive: at St Thomas, for example, it was determined that with insufficient funds to light the church they could not afford services after dark.[107]

From 1854 more churches were putting on extra services, and, as a group, parish churches cultivated a wider range of worship styles. The increase of services between the 1830s and 1850s has been noted in other studies, such as at York.[108] While the number of services 1802–38 remained relatively static, following 1854 there was a steady increase decade by decade (Graph 5-4, p. 334 and Table 5-2). While the number of services rose, over the second half of the century the ratio of Sunday services to other days dropped from 65% to 47% (Graph 5-3).

Table 5-2 Average by decade of total number of listed services each week in visitation returns

1800s	1810s	1820s	1830s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s
32.3	36.3	35	42	147	168	274.6	277.6	317

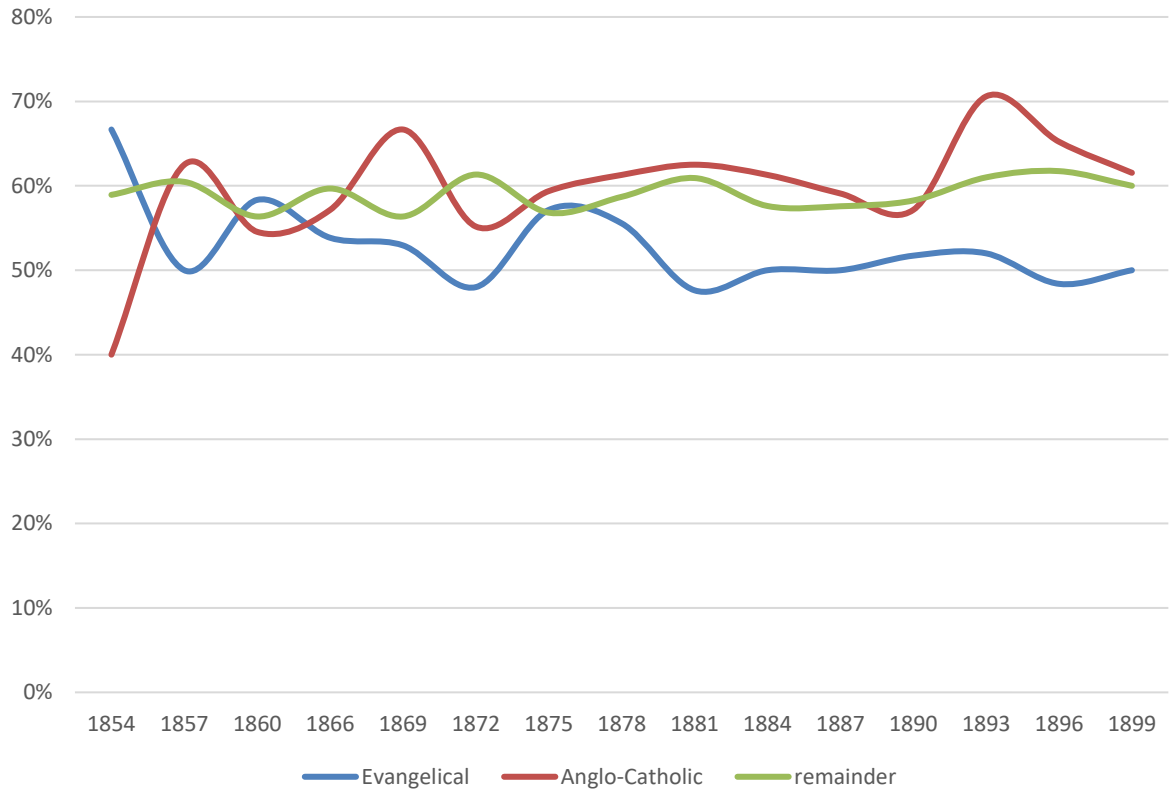
105 VR 1838, St Mary Oxford.

106 Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman, letter to Richard Hurrell Froude, 14 June 1834, p. 276; and letter to R.F. Wilson, 3 July 1834, p. 289*.

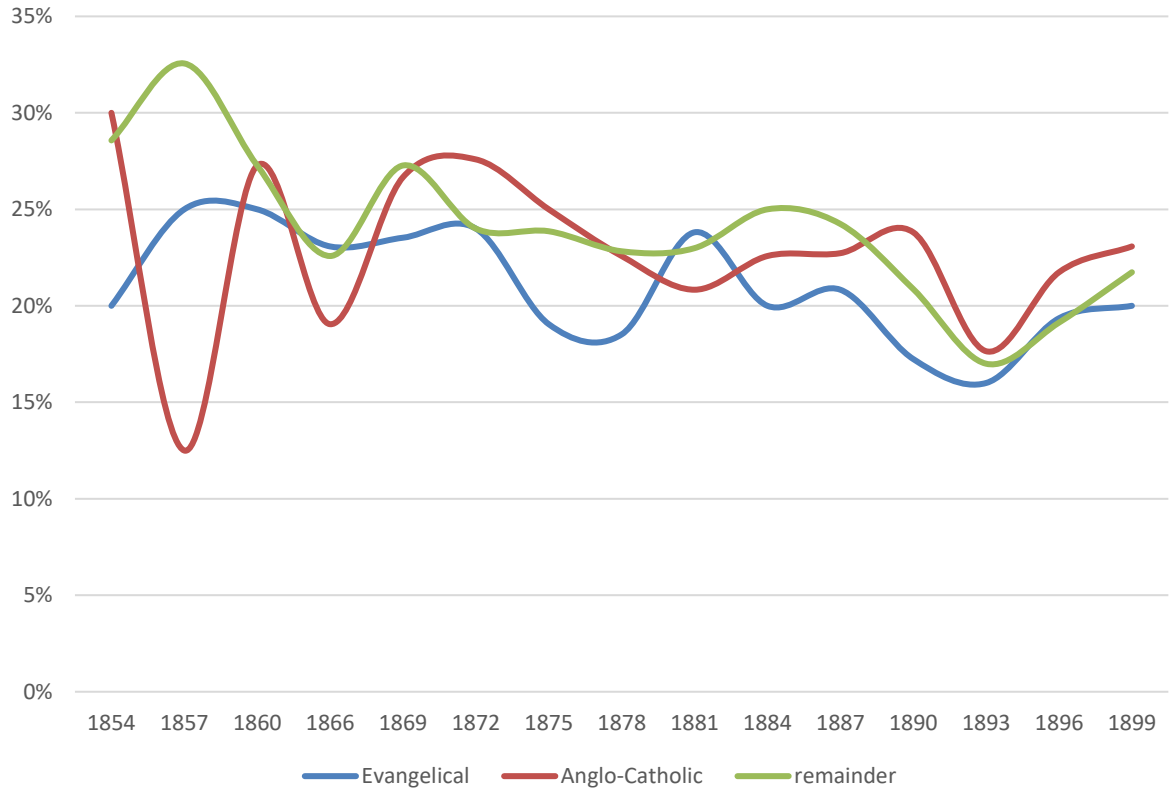
107 VR 1834, St Thomas.

108 Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited*, pp. 172–73.

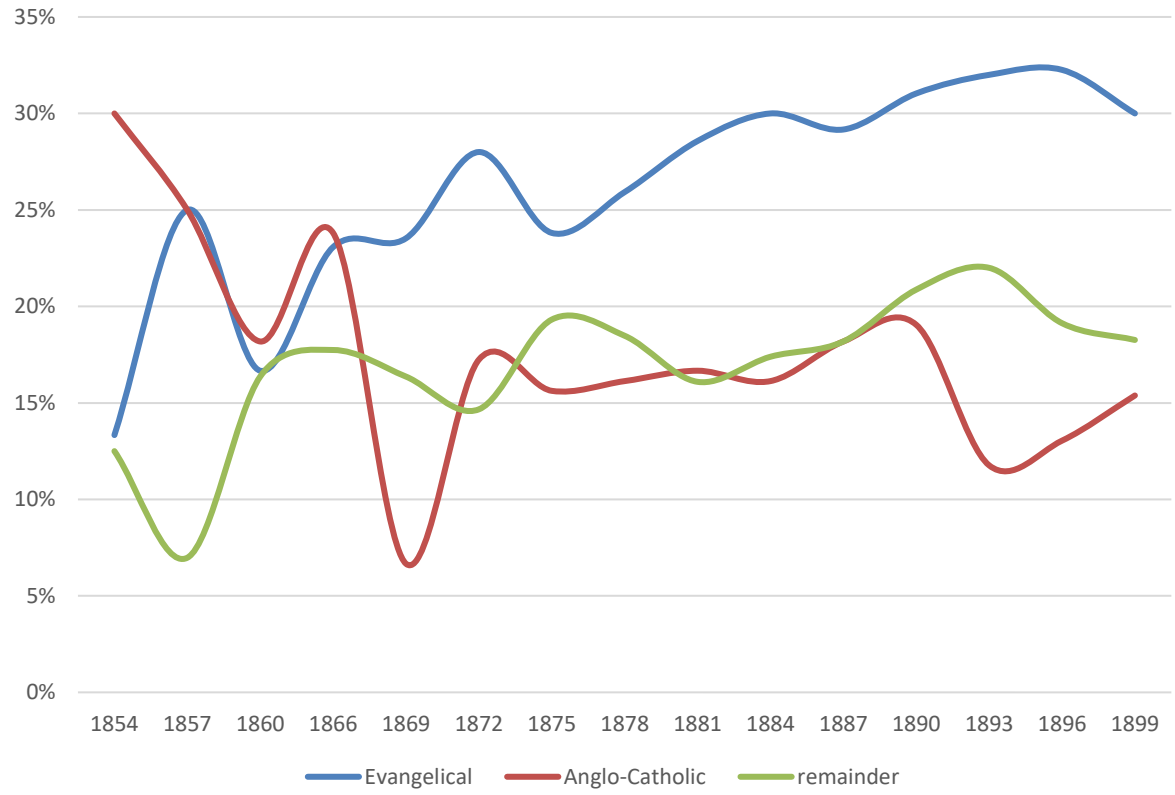
Graph 5-5 Morning Sunday service: percentage by Church party, 1854–99



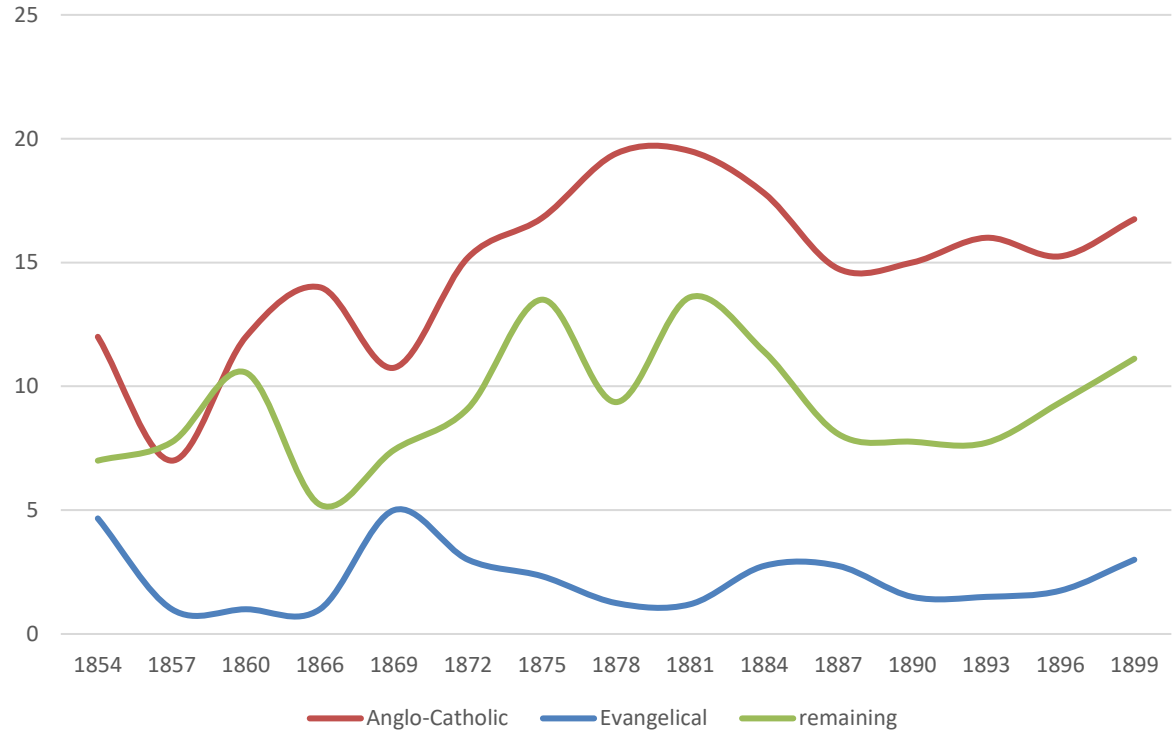
Graph 5-6 Afternoon Sunday service: percentage by Church party, 1854–99



Graph 5-7 Evening Sunday service: percentage by Church party, 1854–99



Graph 5-8 Average number of services each week per church: church party, 1854–99



Graph 5-5, Graph 5-6 (p. 337), and Graph 5-7 (p. 338) demonstrate some correlation between service times and church party.[109] In all cases the greatest majority of services were in the morning, but, as a proportion, Oxford's evangelical churches had more evening services than other churches. Afternoon services display no particular preference for any church parties.

The number of churches only offering double duty diminished from over 80% at the start of the century to below 10% by 1899, mapping a clear increase of services from the middle of the century on. By the final decade about half the churches were providing four Sunday services. Although all churches increased their number of services, it is possible to identify this trend along party lines (Graph 5-8, p. 338). At the evangelical St Ebbe, services were held at 8:00 am, 11:00 am, 3:30 pm and 7:00 pm;[110] at the Anglo-Catholic SS Mary and Nicholas in Littlemore, services were at 8:00 am, 11:00 am, 3:00 pm and 6:30 pm.[111] For several churches still more services had become the usual pattern:[112] by 1872 the Anglo-Catholic St Barnabas offered seven services at 7:00 am, 8:00 am, 10:15 am, 11:00 am, 12:15 pm, 3:00 pm, and 7:00 pm.[113] By the end of the century several other churches had followed suit,

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109 These graphs, and all other graphs in this chapter that examine issues along party lines, were created by calculating averages from ten churches that were publicly recognized as aligning with either evangelicalism (St Aldate, St Ebbe, St Ebbe Holy Trinity, St Clement, St Peter-le-Bailey), or Anglo-Catholicism (St Barnabas, Iron Church/St John the Evangelist, St Paul, SS Philip and James, St Thomas), with all remaining churches grouped together without being designated a particular position.

110 VR 1896, St Ebbe.

111 VR 1899, Littlemore.

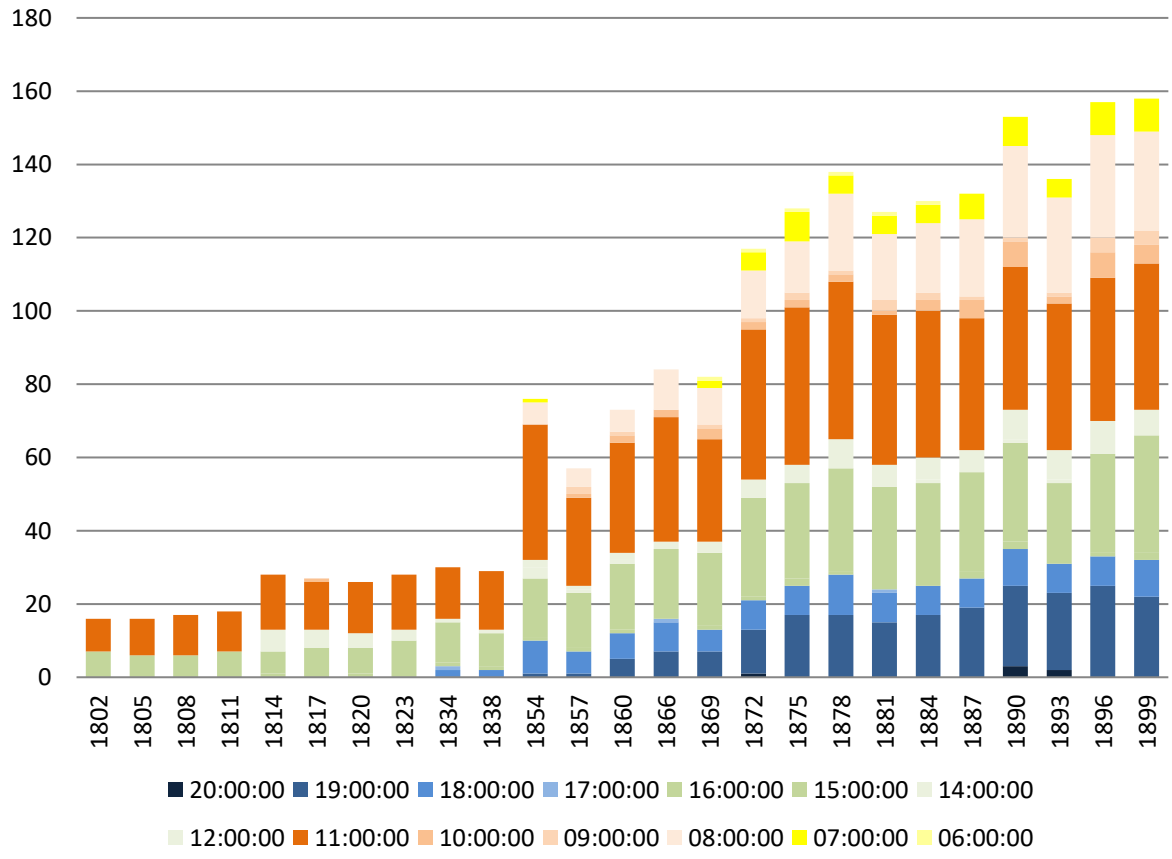
112 Some caution is needed with the data, as churches did not always count midday communion as a separate service; see for example VR 1872, St Paul, and VR 1878, St Ebbe.

113 VR 1872, St Barnabas.

demonstrating that what started as a change driven by party principles had, over time, impacted local church culture and become more widely assimilated.

A necessary consequence of churches providing more services was that they were held across a wider array of times during the day. This development can also be traced as a trend that emerged over the course of the second half of the century. Graph 5-9 shows all Sunday services, clearly demonstrating the increasing importance churches placed upon provision of an evening service. In the first decade of the century all Sunday services were at either 11:00 am or 3:00 pm, but by the end of the century services at these times constituted a little under 50% of all services. Replacing a morning service, potentially of 'extreme length', with a more general distribution of separate shorter Sunday services was seen as greatly advantageous in

Graph 5-9 Sunday service: times of services (hour)



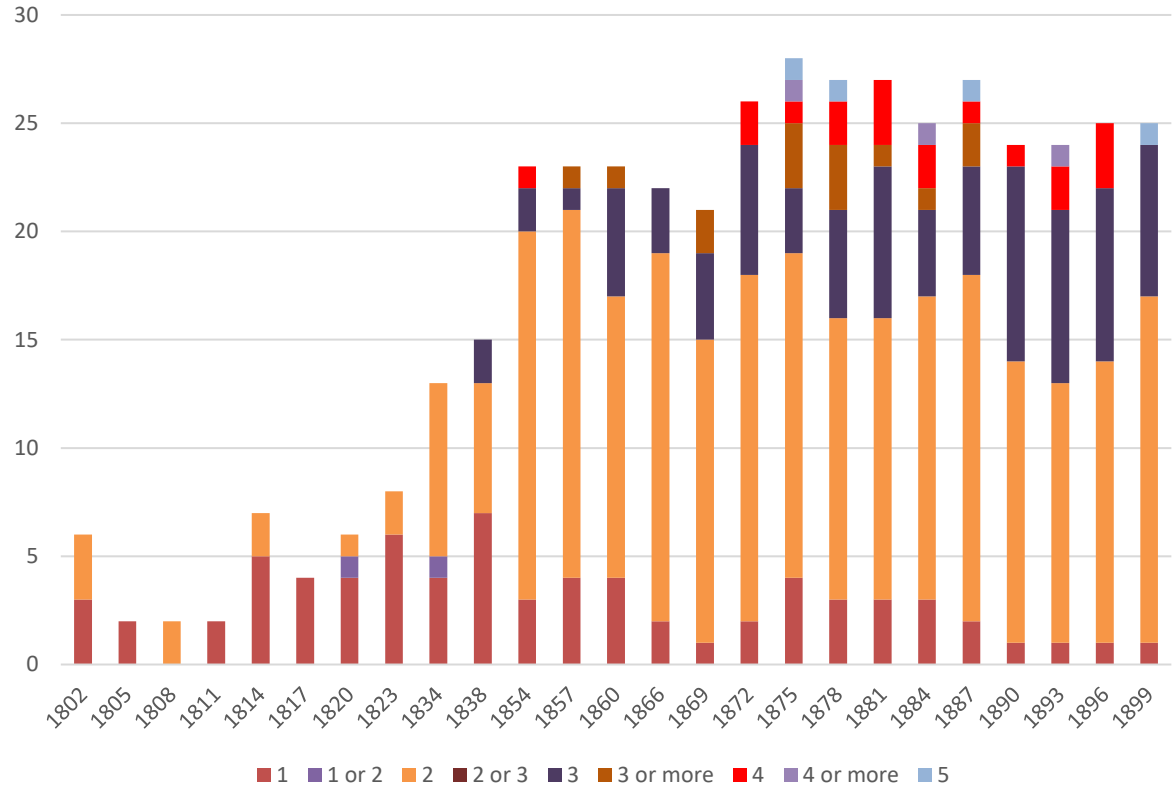
encouraging people to attend.[114] By the end of the century there were Sunday services starting at nearly every hour between 6:00 am to 8:30 pm and by the last two decades one in five services took place in the later evening.

At the start of the century a minimum of one sermon was preached each week. It is likely that at least some ministers preached twice, but with no more than eight churches providing a count of weekly sermons up to 1834, and only two churches providing data 1805–11, these inferences must be treated cautiously. From the 1830s visitation returns started to ask this question directly. The data available from this time to the end of the century is that the most common pattern was two sermons a week, both on Sunday (Graph 5-10, p. 342). In 1832 St Aldate introduced a second sermon following a repewing in 1832 that had increased the church's free sittings.[115] By the 1870s the number of sermons preached in the parishes in this review more than trebled compared with the 1800s to 1820s (Graph 5-11, p. 342). In 1823, St Ebbe and St Peter in the East were the first churches to provide a sermon on a week day, in their Wednesday morning services.[116] Generally speaking, however, if a minister was to introduce a third sermon the mostly likely service for this was Wednesday evening. Owen Chadwick has noted that at the same time that sermons increased in number, they also shortened.[117] Visitation returns only very rarely give details concerning their length, although the University sermon at St Mary Oxford had

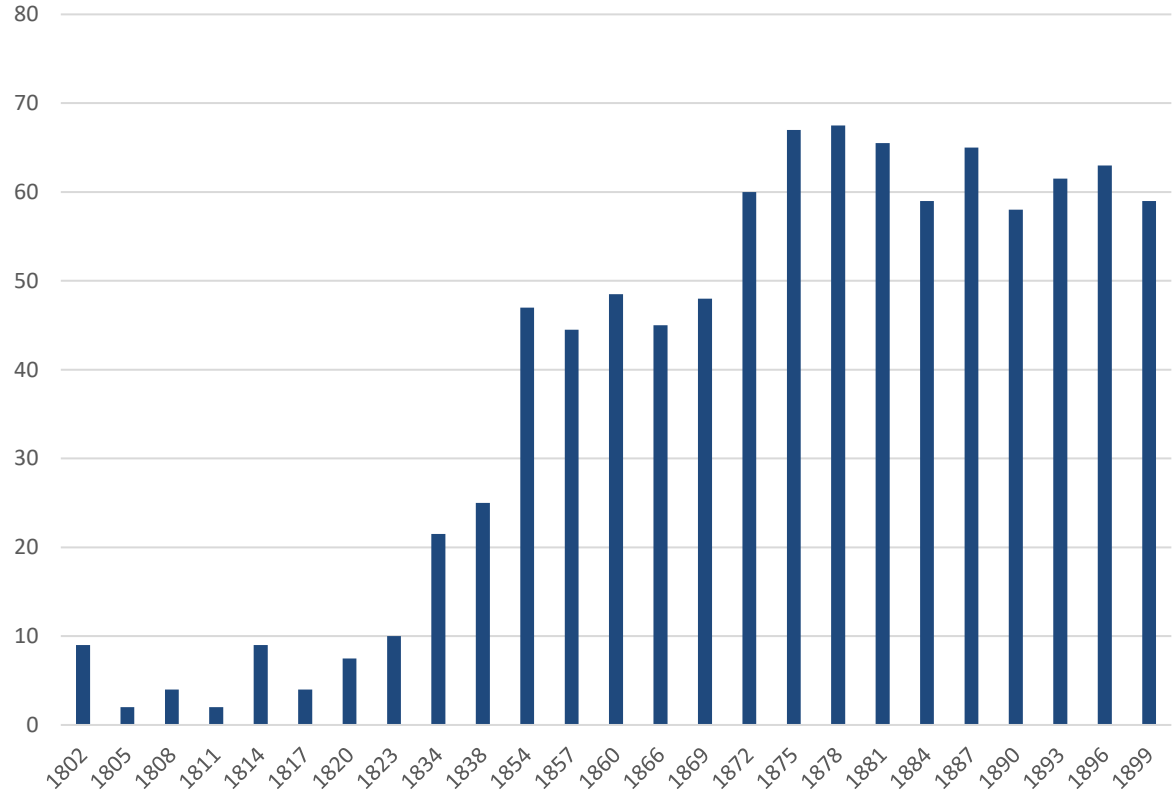
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114 VR 1860, St Cross.
115 VR 1834, St Aldate.
116 VRs 1823, St Ebbe, St Peter in the East.
117 Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 3rd edn, vol. 1 (London: Black, 1971), p. 518.

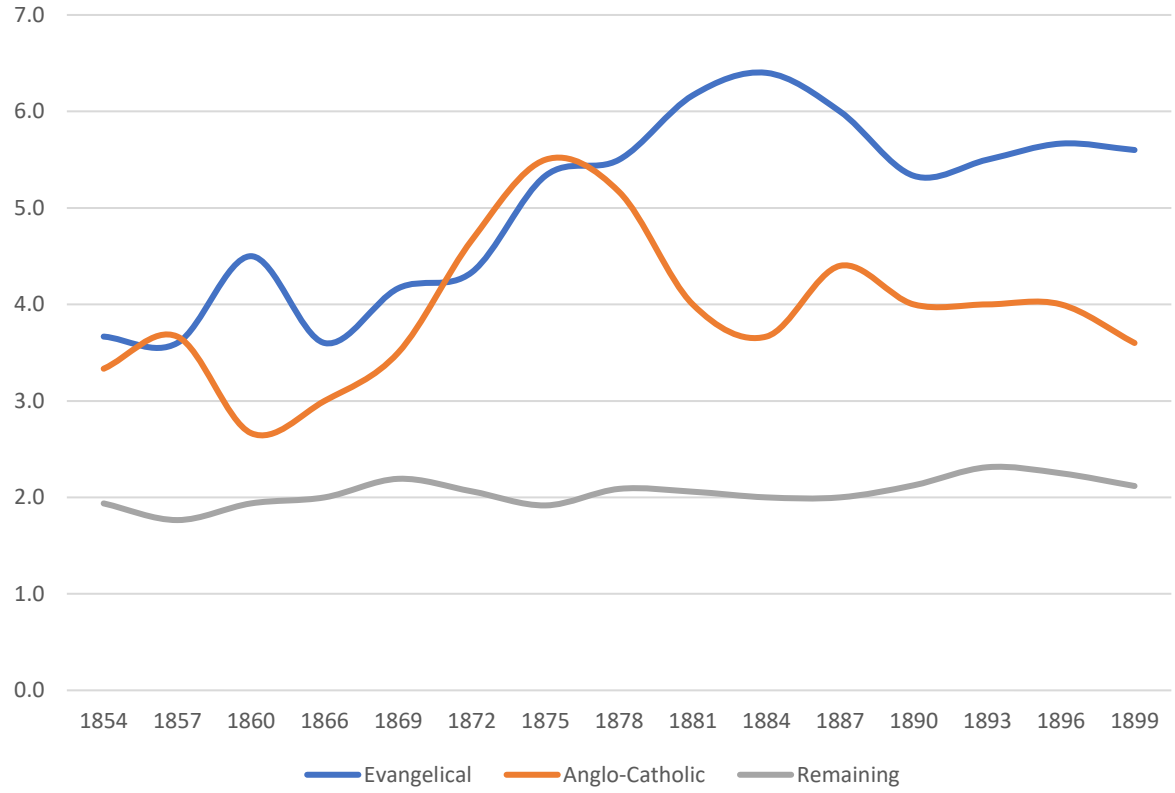
Graph 5-10 Count of churches by number of sermons each week



Graph 5-11 Number of sermons preached each week



Graph 5-12 Average sermons per week at each church: church party



to be fitted between two other services that were 35 minutes apart.[118] It is often emphasized that the University did little to train its students in the practical skills needed to be an effective minster, but one counter example of this is in preaching, and in various colleges and halls several times a year lectures were offered on the important science of proper elocution.[119]

If sermon frequency is compared along party lines clear distinctions emerge. In the parishes in this review the evangelical and Anglo-Catholic churches provided many more sermons than their neighbouring parishes (Graph 5-12). The evangelicals had a strong emphasis on the word being preached, and from early on the Tractarians had

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118 VR 1878, St Mary Oxford.

119 'Elocution in Oxford', *OUH* (24 September 1870), p. 12.

been deeply influenced by the evangelicals in this respect.[120] Neither Chamberlain nor Benson were remembered as gifted orators, but both invested great effort in their preaching,[121] and in the 1870s at the Iron Church a different sermon was given every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening at 17:30.[122] At the evangelical Peter-le-Bailey and Holy Trinity St Ebbe, from 1874 to 1884 between four and five sermons were preached every week. Nearly all churches mention that extra sermons were preached on certain holy days, either on the day or, at SS Philip and James, on the evening before.[123]

Communion

Over the course of the century a rising number of clergy accepted the concept that how the furnishings of the church were ordered communicated moral and spiritual values to the people inside. A renewed emphasis on the ritual of holy communion and God's perceived presence became a matter of great significance from the 1830s on,[124] as part of a wider developing view that re-oriented communion to be a key observance defining Church membership.[125] Alongside these developments, an

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120 Jeremy Morris, 'Preaching the Oxford Movement', in Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689-1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 410.

121 Simeon, *Chamberlain*, p. 14; M.V. Woodgate, *Father Benson: Founder of the Cowley Fathers* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1953), p. 53.

122 VRs 1875, 1878 Iron Church; VRs 1875–87, Peter-le-Bailey and Holy Trinity St Ebbe.

123 VR 1875, SS Philip and James.

124 Alf Härdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1965); and Yates, *Anglican Ritualism*.

125 Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, p. 42.

influential minority of Clergy were challenging what constituted proper religious use of ornament and decoration.

Alterations made to the interior of Anglican churches — 'improvements to church fabric' as described in the visitation returns — were not only to increase seating capacity: significant changes were instigated for theological and aesthetic purposes. A gazetteer collated as part of researching this thesis[126] counted 237 instances of major church improvements. Of these only 90 were to increase seating in the church: 67 others concerned the maintenance and soundness of the building, such as installing heating, repairing a roof etc., and 155 changes were justified for theological/aesthetic reasons.[127]

Following the Reformation most Anglican churches had been reordered to accommodate changes to the liturgy that required congregational participation.[128] Changes reflecting this continued through to the early nineteenth century: in 1825 St Thomas was reordered into a 'long wall' layout, with the pulpit moved further into the nave,[129] and St Mary Magdalene re-orientated its interior on its north/south axis,

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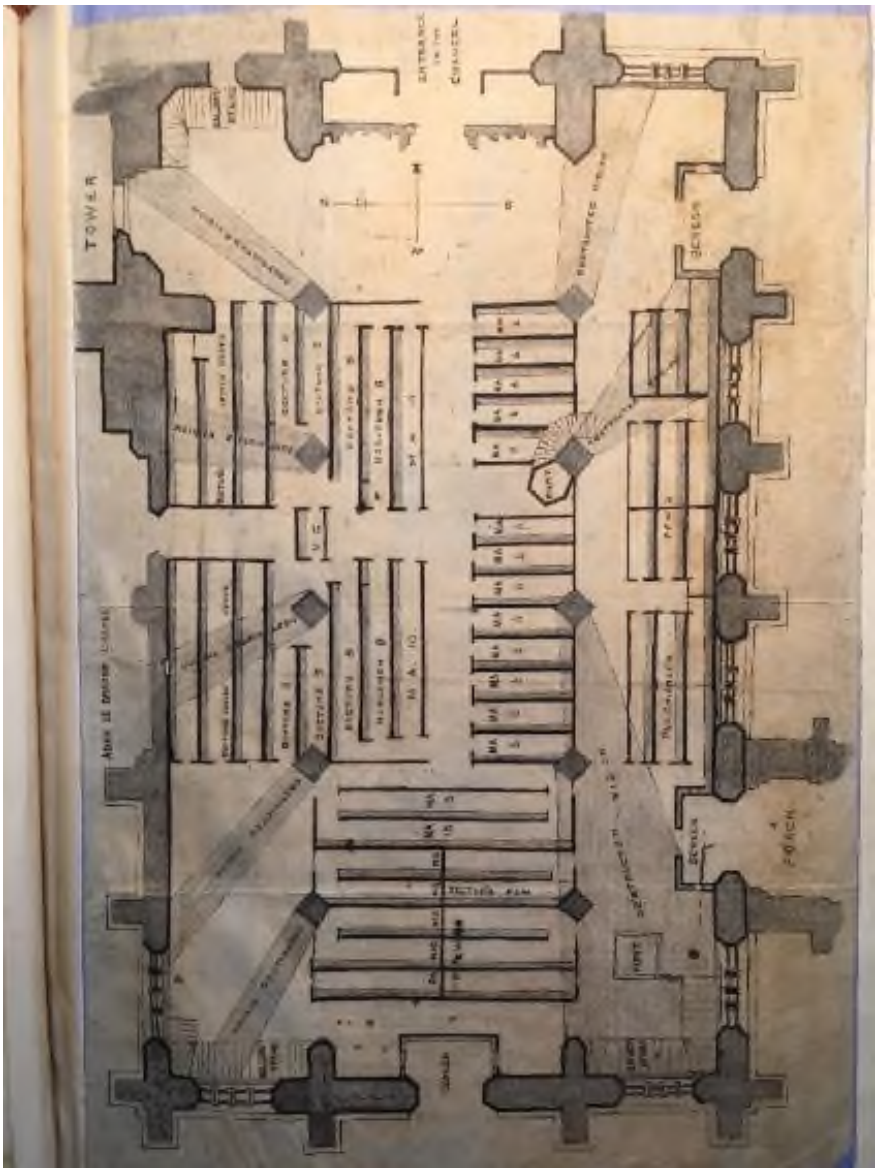
126 This gazetteer (not included in this thesis) was formed from compiling all responses in the visitation returns concerning church building or fabric, and then supplemented with research in the LPL, OHC, Bodl., and entries in the *ODC,* 1860–1899.

127 Some changes were of more than one type, such that the total for these figures is higher than 237.

128 Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith, and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches, 1600–1900* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); see also Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe, 1500–2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), chap. 4.

129 Thomas W. Squires, *In West Oxford: Historical Notes and Pictures Concerning the Parish of S.Thomas the Martyr, Oxford* (Oxford: A.R. Mowbray, 1928), pp. 15–17.

Image 5-2 Ground plan St Mary Oxford, 1827



creating a space more akin to an acoustical church.[130] An 1820s floor plan of St Mary Oxford exemplifies this priority, with shaded voids labelled 'obstructed vision' determined by not seeing the pulpit, and not by being unable to see a communion table (Image 5-2[131]). By reordering the church such that its pews and benches

130 'Church of Saint Mary Magdalen', OHC, PAR 208/11/Y1/1: ground plan, 1862; and 'St Mary Magdalen Church', OHC, PAR 208/11/Y1/9: plan of pews, 1862.

131 OHC, PAR 209/11/MS1/1: ground plan, St Mary Oxford included with detailed 1827 pew plan.

Image 5-3 St Thomas, interior, 1875.



uniformly faced east towards the communion table, the bodies of the participants themselves were thus being rearranged to be part of a material declaration of a changing theological emphasis on the importance of receiving communion.

Adopting the language of the industrial revolution, Chamberlain in 1852 wrote that the church interior was 'an *engine* very powerful for influencing the minds of men; and that it ever has been the will of God to use external things for this purpose … beauty of colour and form to ravish the eye.'[132] This approach was exemplified at his own Oxford church St Thomas, where a photo taken in 1875 captures — alas, in black and white — what was an overwhelming riot of colour and pattern (Image 5-3).[133] As

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132 Thomas Chamberlain, 'On some Principles to be Observed in Ornamenting Churches', *The Ecclesiologist,* 13 (1852), pp. 17–18

133 Image by Hill and Sanders, 1875, reproduced from Squires, *West Oxford*, p. 42.

William Whyte has observed, it was a style that 'forces the worshipper to encounter the divine not by removing distractions, but by overwhelming every sense.'[134] St Thomas's interior was later whitewashed entirely, but the eastern apse at St Barnabas largely remains as it was after a makeover in 1893, that closely followed the original 1869 design (Image 5-4, p. 348).[135]

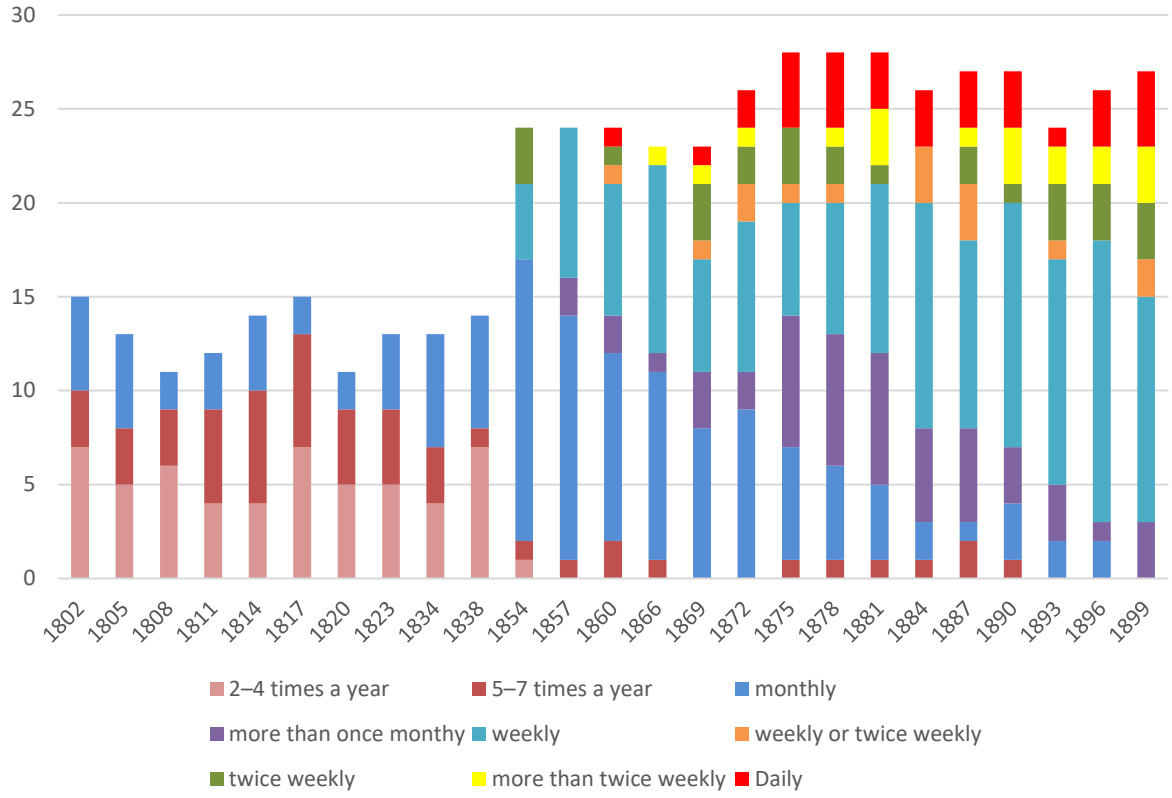
Image 5-4 St Barnabas, interior, 2007



134 Whyte, *Unlocking the Church*, p. 81.

135 Detail of photo by Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P, interior, St Barnabas, 2007; for full image see https://www.flickr.com/photos/paullew/381659780.

Graph 5-13 Frequency of communion, 1802–99: count

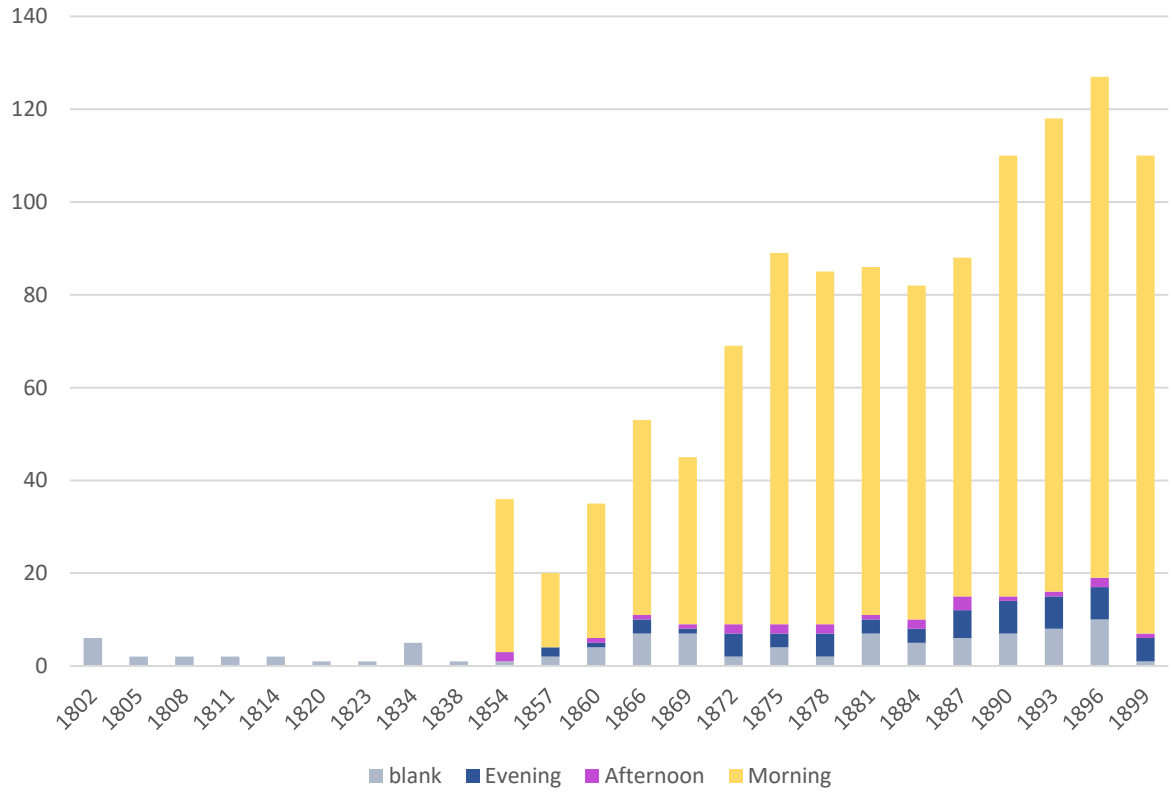


This focus on communion is clearly evident in the visitation returns in this study. Questions on providing and participating in communion were asked over nearly the entire century. In their visitation returns it is clear the frequency of communion provision greatly increased. Up to 1838 the majority of churches — between 55% and 85% — provided communion on select holy days only, with between 30% and 50% offering quarterly communion or less. On average, just under 30% provided monthly communion, always on the first day of the month if no holy day was being celebrated for that month. (Graph 5-13). Over the course of the second half of the century this overall conformity was replaced with a blossoming pattern of diversity as churches started to provide more communion services. Quarterly communion had stopped entirely by 1857, and by 1899 no churches offered fewer than 12 communion services a year. By the 1880s about half of the churches provided

weekly communion and a little over 10% were holding daily communion. This pattern has been noted elsewhere and is likely to have been retained in the nineteenth-century,[136] although with eighteenth-century precedents.[137]

Overwhelmingly, communion was offered in the morning (Graph 5-14). No returns from before 1854 specify when in the day communion was administered, almost certainly because an evening communion was practically unheard of.[138] Bishops Wilberforce, Mackarness, and Stubbs all disapproved of evening communion service,

Graph 5-14 Communion: time of day, 1802–99



136 Platt, *Diocese of Carlisle, 1814–1815*, p. xlix.

137 See for example Beckett, Tranter, and Bateman, *Visitation Returns from Derby*, p. xxvii, where changes across the diocese were already establishing 'surprising variation'.

138 It is likely the blank returns from 1854 on are also recording morning communion, but they have been excluded from statistical analysis in this section.

although none of them categorically forbade them.[139] The tradition of only providing communion in the morning stemmed in part from a pre-Reformation teaching that communicants should not eat that day until taking communion (fasting communion).[140] Stubb's criticism — that a communicant expecting the Church to provide communion at 'his convenience at the end of the day'[141] had by default forsaken its benefit — was echoed by other nineteenth-century opponents of evening communion. Some parishes in this study clearly held strong views against providing a communion service later in the day: in Holywell's parish magazine it was described as a 'profane and shocking innovation.'[142] The nineteenth-century promotion of evening communion has been identified as primarily an evangelical position[143] and the record in the visitation returns at Oxford supports this. Of the five churches that most commonly provided evening communion four were strongly evangelical: St Aldate, Holy Trinity St Ebbe, St Clement, and St Peter-le-Bailey all offered monthly evening communion by 1890. But this pattern is not consistent. Even St Barnabas, one of the most Anglo-Catholic churches in this review, offered in 1872 evening communion at 17:00 and 19:00 on holy days, although in the next visitation the practice, possibly experimental, had ceased.[144]

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139 Stubbs, 'Third Visitation Charge, ... 1896', p. 288.

140 Orme, *Going to Church in Medieval England*, p. 210.

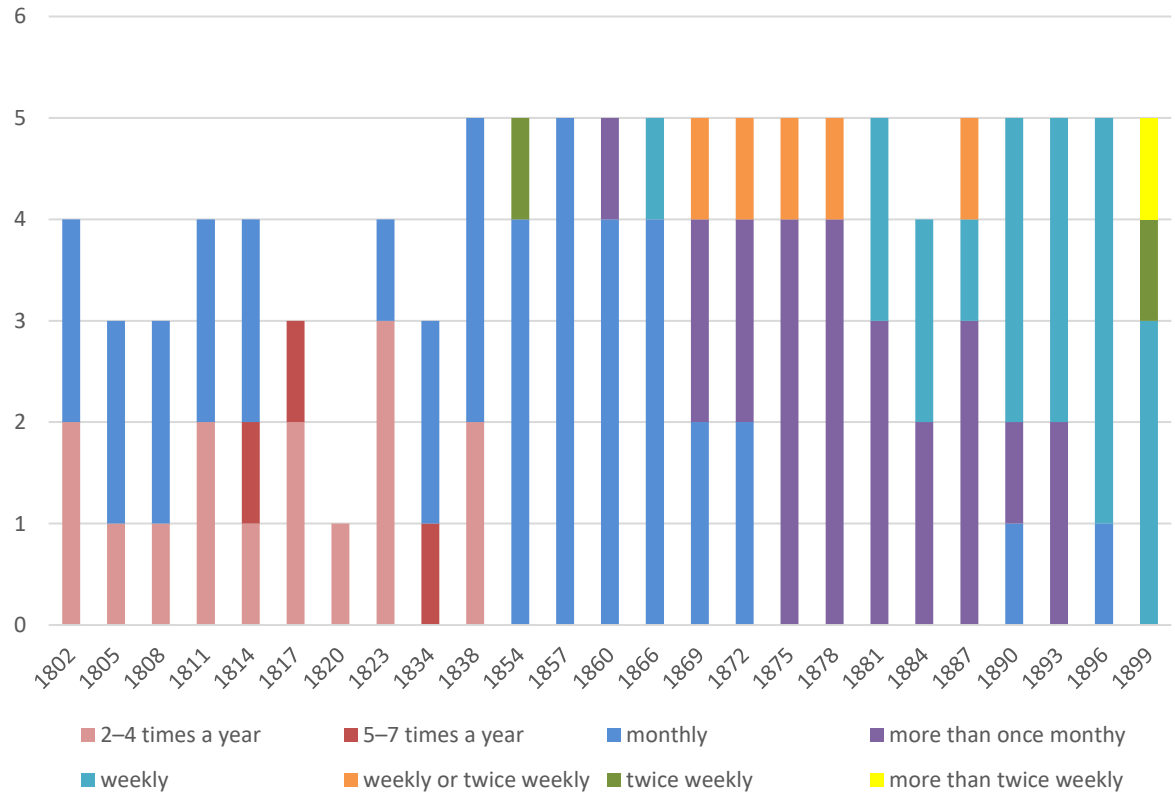
141 Stubbs, 'Second Visitation Charge, ... 1893', p. 171.

142 *Holywell Parish Magazine*/May (May 1875), p. 140.

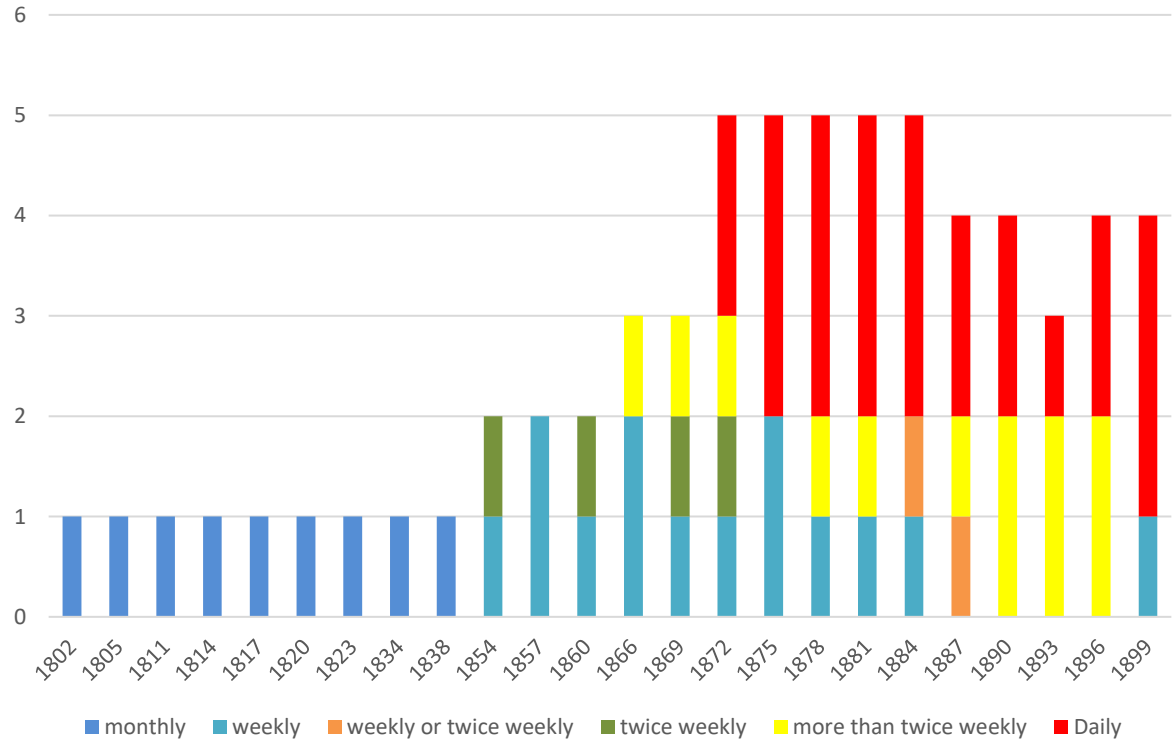
143 Yates, *Anglican Ritualism*, p. 54; here Yates also connects a Tractarian preference to early communion services with a return of a fasting communion.

144 VR 1872, St Barnabas; no other evening communion is listed in its other visitation returns.

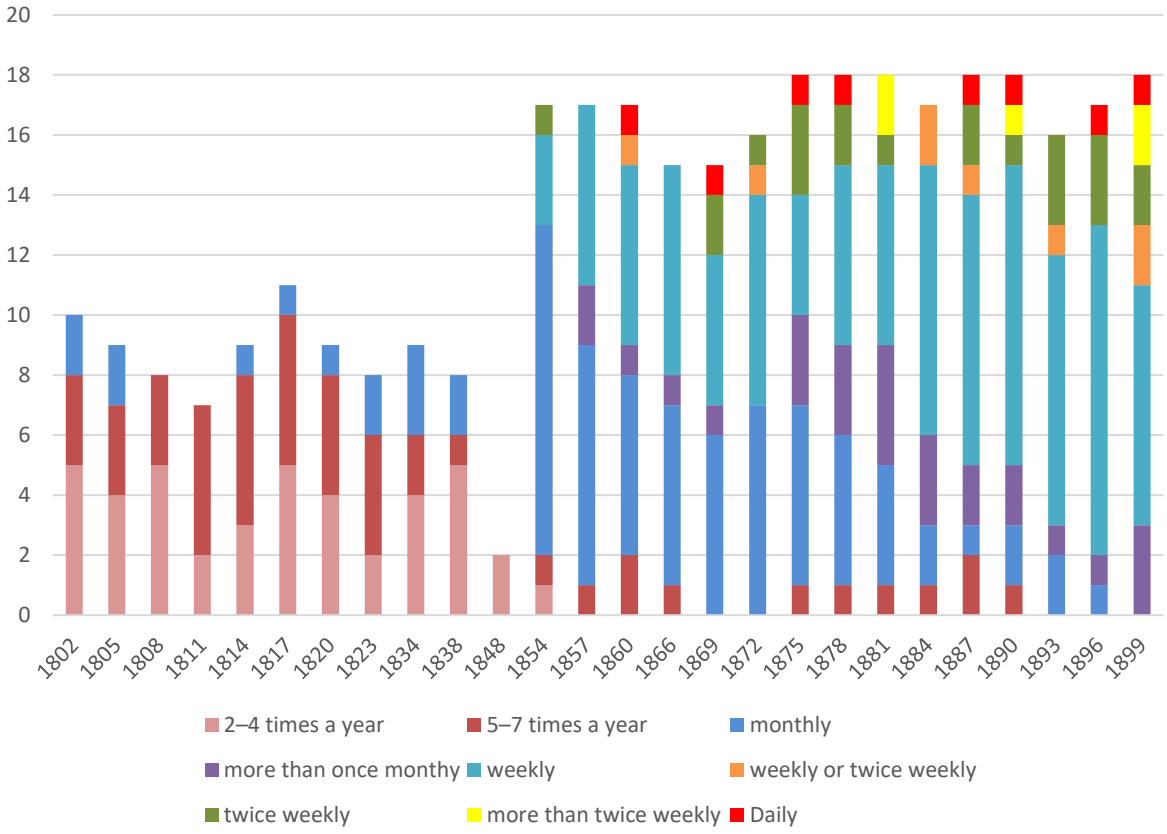
Graph 5-15 Visitation returns: frequency of Holy Communion evangelical churches only



Graph 5-16 Visitation returns: frequency of Holy Communion Anglo-Catholic churches only



Graph 5-17 Visitation returns: frequency of Holy Communion, remaining churches



Further investigation along church party lines both clarifies and complexifies the overall picture of communion frequency (Graph 5-15 and Graph 5-16, p. 353 and Graph 5-17). A clear — and unsurprising — pattern shows that high-frequency communion services took place almost exclusively within the Anglo-Catholic churches but in this the evangelicals did not diverge greatly from the remaining churches.

Counting communicants

As discussed in chapter two, within the city a weakening of parochial boundaries, combined with people attending city churches for reasons other than residence, had led to large portions of a church's attendees being outside the parish, and possibly not known to the officiating minister. It was partly because so many attendees were

non-parishioners that ministers found it difficult to calculate a precise tally of communicants.

One method Wilberforce advocated to help address this was for each church to maintain lists that counted 'your whole congregations, children and adults', and included the names of all communicants: doing so added 'a most desirable accuracy to the numerical returns of those parishes'.[145] Wilberforce believed that such lists did more than provide accurate figures: he considered them a valuable resource for helping ministers track absentees who might benefit from a pastoral visit, especially those facing hardship or difficulties.[146] The establishment of communion guilds was a later, more focussed response that also addressed these issues, and, between 1872 and 1899, 70 different returns from 15 different parishes refer to running a guild of some sort, either for communion or more general 'religious instruction'. In all instances the guilds were divided by sex, and, where specified, nearly always met monthly. At St Barnabas newly confirmed people were supervised until they made their first Communion, after which 'if fit', they were then invited to join one of the six guilds that they ran.[147] In no return is any mention made of how many people were part of a guild.

Mention of communicant lists in the visitation returns persisted until 1890, at which point the requirement to include the number of communicating parish residents stopped. The evidence from the visitation returns suggests that while churches were

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145 Wilberforce, *1857 Charge*, pp. 14–15.
146 Wilberforce, *1848 Charge*, p. 70.
147 VRs 1875–1887, 1899, St Barnabas.

patchy at best in tracking attendees to their services, maintaining a list of communicants was more feasible. When asked to provide a count of communicants at their church who also lived in the parish, between 1866 and 1890, 40% of the ministers referred to their lists to answer this question; another 42% provided more general estimates, while the sources of the remaining 18% are unclear.[148]

In some places even limiting a list to communicants and not hearers was deemed too great an administrative burden. At St Barnabas, for example, having five communion services on Sunday made keeping a list too difficult,[149] and at St Cross the extra communicants from the University who were only present during term time made the lists, in the opinion of the minister, too inconsistent to be useful.[150] But these churches were in the minority. By 1857, 236 parishes in the diocese of Oxford were keeping such lists,[151] and in the parishes under review, more than half the churches were following their bishop's suggestion by 1860 (Table 5-3). By the end of the century it seems that nearly every church had attempted at least once to take on this administrative task, despite many of them complaining that doing so was arduous. One frequently followed strategy was to collate the lists annually before Easter communion, when details on communicants who were also parishioners were updated.[152] Clearly the clergy wanted to follow the directives of their bishop, and to

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148 Data from my research.

149 VR 1878, St Barnabas; lists were instead taken from membership to their various parochial guilds.

150 VR 1869, St Cross.

151 Wilberforce, *1857 Charge*, pp. 14–15.

152 See for example VR 1881, St Giles; VR 1887, St Frideswide.

Table 5-3 First return to record that a communicant list was being maintained

Parishes	First VR with list mentioned
Binsey St Margaret	By 1896
Cowley St James	By 1854
Cowley St John Iron Church / St John the Evangelist	No response
Headington St Andrews	By 1884
Headington Quarry Holy Trinity	By 1854
Iffley St Mary	By 1854
Littlemore SS Mary and Nicholas	By 1854
Marston St Nicholas	By 1857
North Oxford St Margaret	By 1899
Oxford All Saints	By 1860
Oxford SS Philip and James	Never
Oxford St Aldate	By 1860
Oxford St Aldate: St Matthew Grandpont	No response
Oxford St Barnabas	By 1878
Oxford St Clement	By 1890
Oxford St Cross Holywell	By 1866
Oxford St Ebbe	By 1854
Oxford St Ebbe Holy Trinity	By 1869
Oxford St Giles	By 1857
Oxford St Mary	By 1872
Oxford St Mary Magdalen	By 1878
Oxford St Michael	By 1857
Oxford St Paul	By 1881
Oxford St Peter in the East	By 1854
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey	By 1857
Oxford St Thomas	By 1854
Oxford St Thomas: St Frideswide	By 1875
Summertown St John the Baptist	By 1854

provide better and more accurate information in their returns, even if doing so meant compromising by keeping a tally of numbers, but not of names. [153]

[153] VR 1887, SS Mary and John; and VR 1884, Iron Church.

In only a few instances were details on these lists copied into the returns. At St Ebbe in 1887, for example, John Arkell (rector St Ebbe 1880–1901) carried out a house-by-house investigation to keep his list up-to-date. He counted 163 communicants who lived in the parish (53 male and 110 female), and 70 who did not (20 male and 50 female). Another 40 communicants who lived within the parish communicated elsewhere. Of the 2,340 people in the parish, 10.4% were communicants and 8.7% attended St Ebbe rather than some other church.[154]

No lists survive today, although visitation returns mention them as their source for providing communicant numbers until 1890, after which point the question on the number of communicants in the parish was no longer asked. Some parishes reported a significant increase while others did not. When Noel arrived in Jericho in 1896 he counted 20 communicants within the parish, but by 1884, while noting that counting communicants in St Barnabas was difficult because so many of the young people were at work, he counted 369 people.[155] From the replies, between 1866 and 1890 the average percentage of parish residents recorded as communicating in the parish church, despite fluctuations, nearly doubled from 5.95% to 11.11% (Graph 5-18, p. 358).

Number of church attendees taking communion

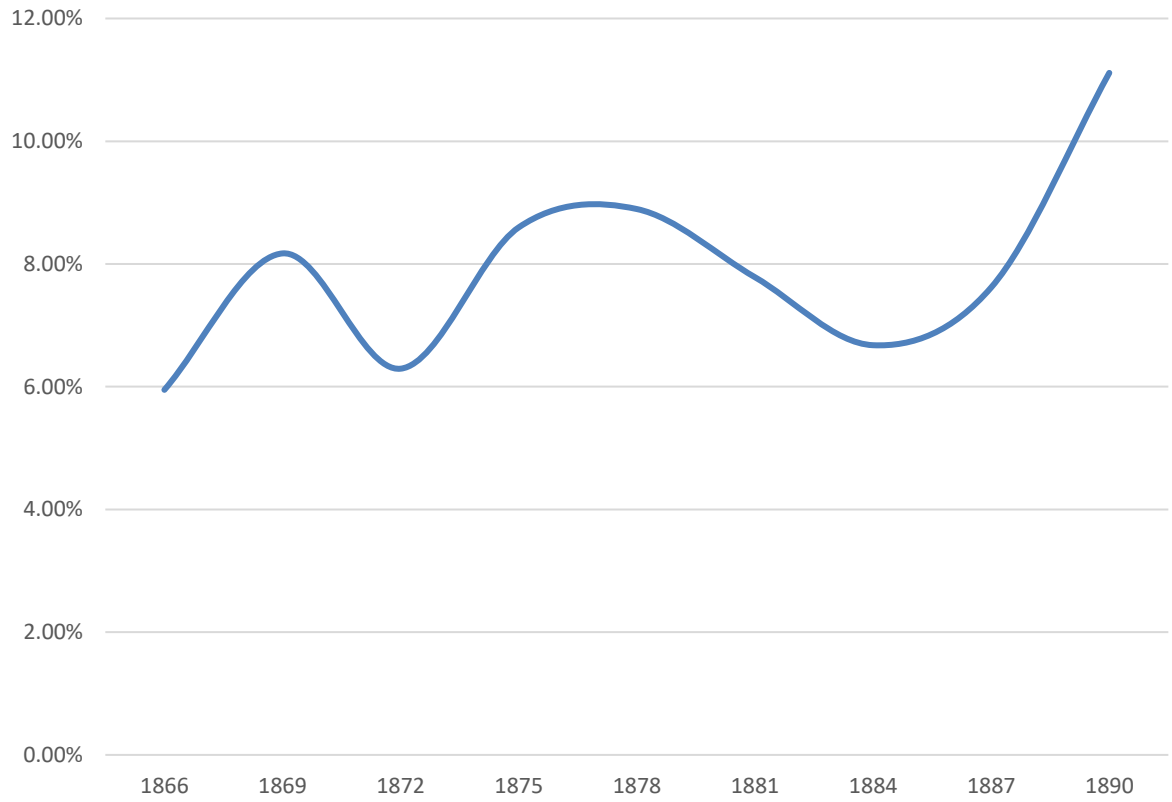
From 1802 to 1887 ministers were asked to indicate how many people were taking

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154 VR 1887, St Ebbe; the count of 2,340 people is a subset of the 5,297 from the census return for this district; Arkell's numbers are very close to the 1887 parish average (see next paragraph), which was 7.62%.

155 VR 1884, St Barnabas; numbers for 1887 and 1889 dipped to 300.

Graph 5-18 Average percentage of parishioners taking communion at local church, 1866–90

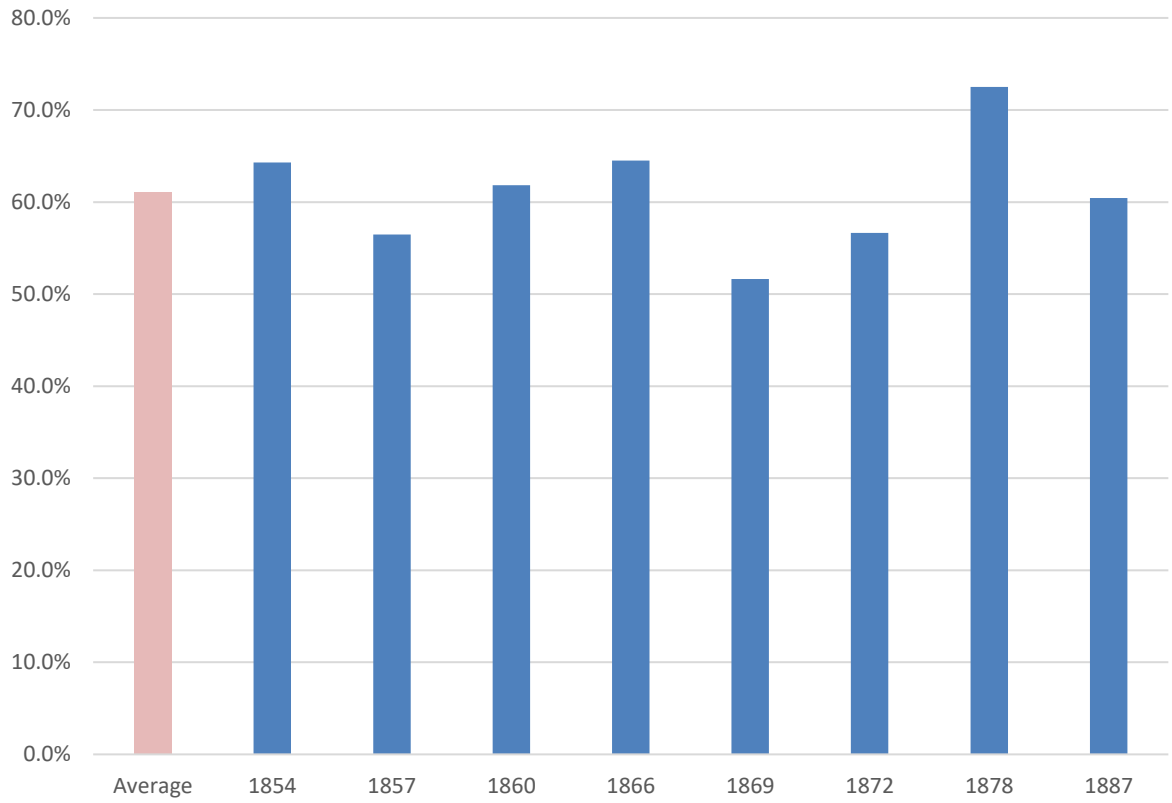


communion at their church, which was a different question from how many communicants were parishioners. For most of this time Oxford's bishops seemed content to know communicant numbers either for the great festivals, or for Easter alone, and as a result this figure can be applied for nearly the entire century. From a practical perspective counting Easter communicants was appealing: it required only one count a year, numbers could be counted by one individual during the service, it drew more communicants than any other day in the year, and figures from different services could be combined with less risk of an individual being counted more than once.

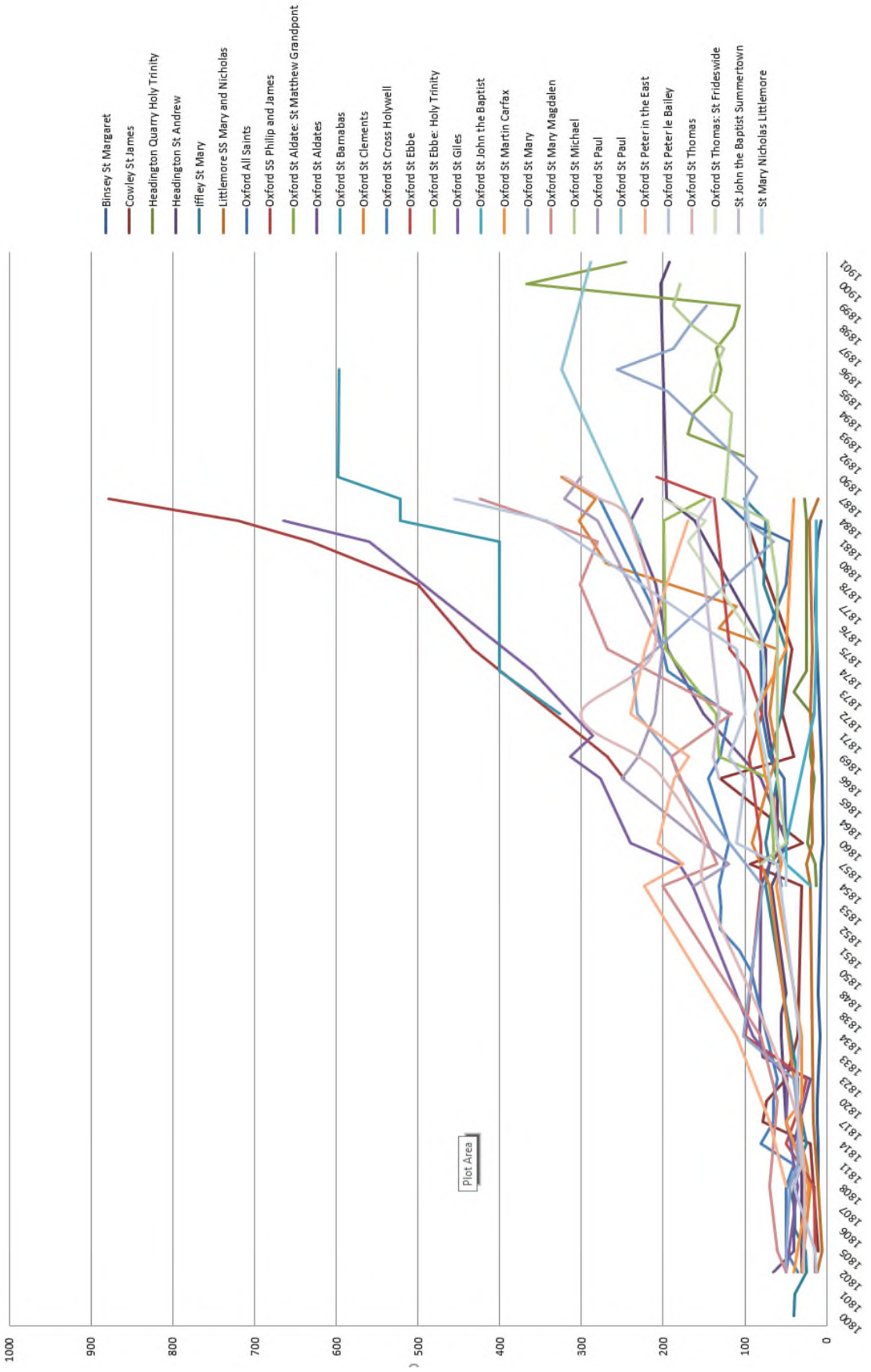
Rather frustratingly, exactly what was being counted is sometimes unclear. The problem with capturing numbers for Easter and the great festivals is the possibility

that what is being counted mostly comprises nominal Anglicans who attend church infrequently at best. In the returns there are 88 instances where the minister provides figures for Easter/great festivals as well as monthly communion. Only from 1854 onwards are there enough responses to make a meaningful calculation (Graph 5-19). Overall, the returns record that from 1854 to 1887 60.4% of communicants at Easter were also partaking of monthly communion.

Graph 5-19 Easter/great festival communicants attending monthly communion as a percentage



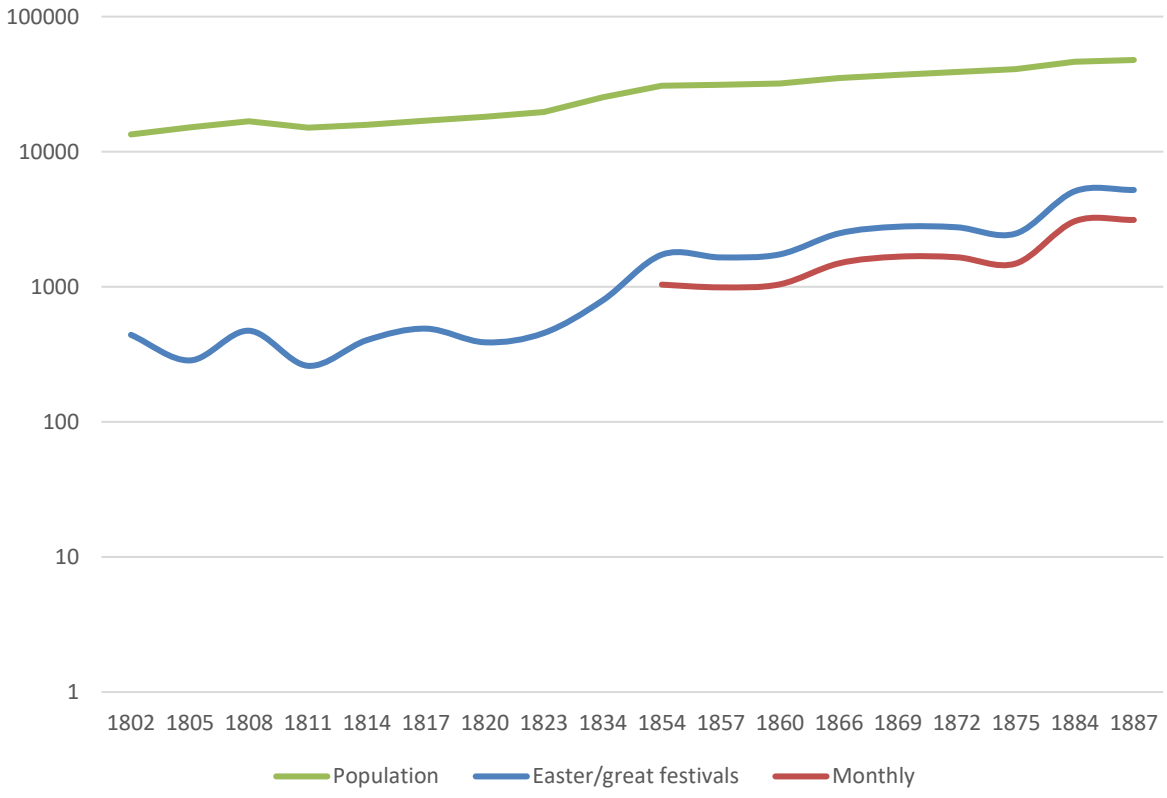
Graph 5-20 Communicant numbers: Easter/great festivals, 1802–99



Graph 5-20 (p. 360) graphs these numbers for all churches. The muddle of fluctuations combined with the number of churches makes it too difficult to form conclusions on any particular church. Two general observations can be made, however. Firstly, more people were taking communion at Easter and the great festivals in the second half of the century than the first half. Secondly, within this consistent growth some churches were far more active in offering communion than others, notably St Giles, St Barnabas, and SS Philip and James.

Comparing total figures with corresponding population numbers, and then calculating communicants as a percentage of that population, helps make sense of this disordered data, although at the cost of losing its complex variegation. It is evident in Graph 5-21 that the overall number of communicants increased at a higher

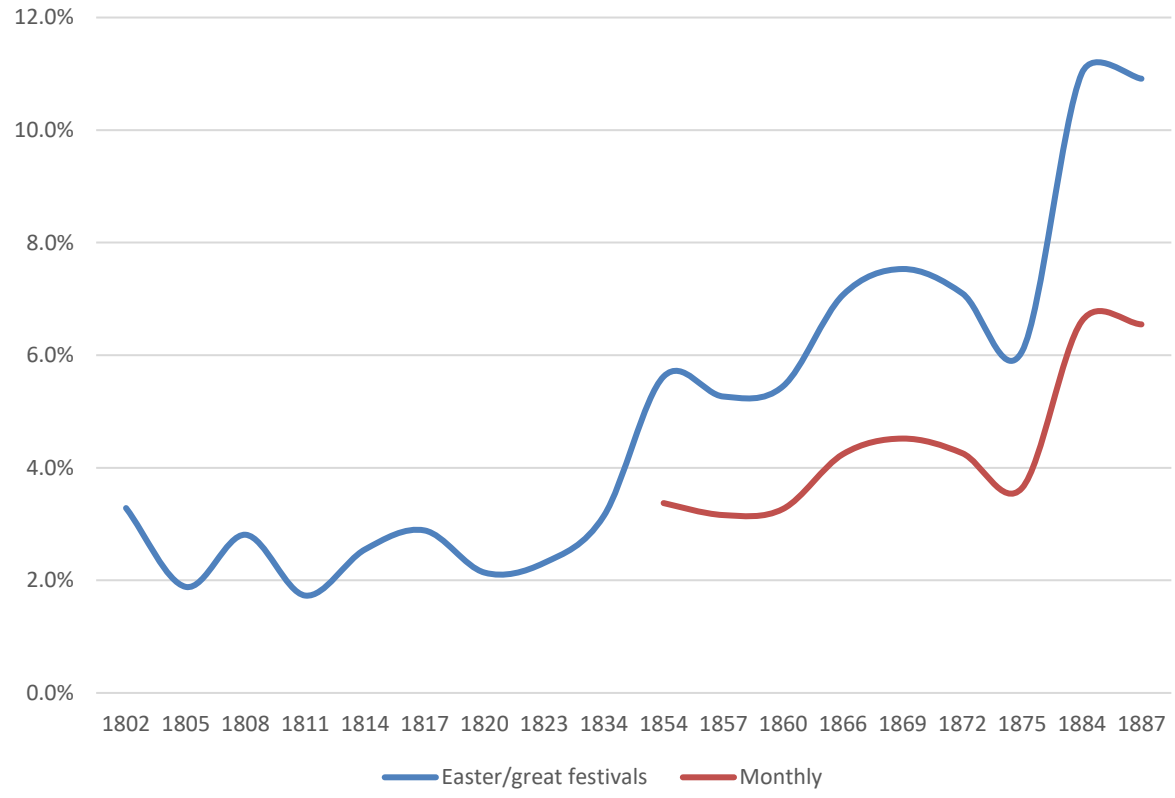
Graph 5-21 Communicants and population, 1802 to 1887 (logorhythmic chart)



rate than the population; this data closely aligns with Graph 5-22 depicting the percentage of population that were communicants. The returns record a clear growth of communicants that was rising at a faster rate than the population, with participation at Easter and great festivals rising from 2–3% in 1802/05 to 10–11% in 1884/87, and monthly communicants rising from about 3% in 1854 to 6–7% in 1884/87. These figures align reasonably well with the 4.83% estimate of Oxfordshire communicants in 1850 as calculated in the 1977 text *Churches and Churchgoers*.[156]

It is likely that for many of the ministers in these parishes this increase fell short of their goals, perhaps, for some, acutely so. Evaluating success today is no less a

Graph 5-22 Communicants as % of population, 1802 to 1887



[156] Currie, Gilbert, and Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, p. 26.

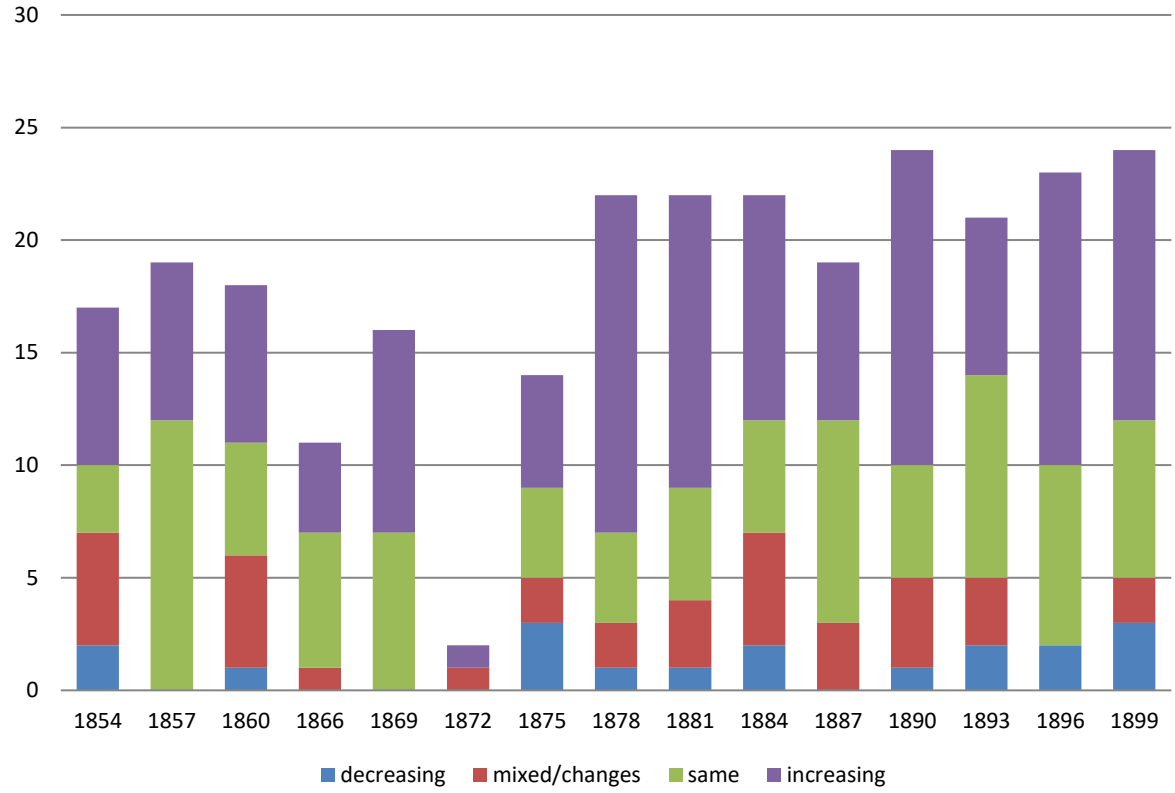
subjective exercise than it was in the nineteenth century, but for figures to increase at a rate four times higher than population suggests Anglicans were active in their communities and home mission, and increasingly using reception as a measure of piety, influencing their residents to participate in a rite that the Anglican Church considered profoundly sacred. Knight has argued that an intensification of reverence or fear of the rite of communion and receiving it in a state of unworthiness might have depressed overall numbers;[157] if that was a relevant factor in the parishes in this review, it is possible that communicant numbers were undercounting attendees who did not participate as often but were nevertheless regularly present and religiously committed to the Church.

Church attendance

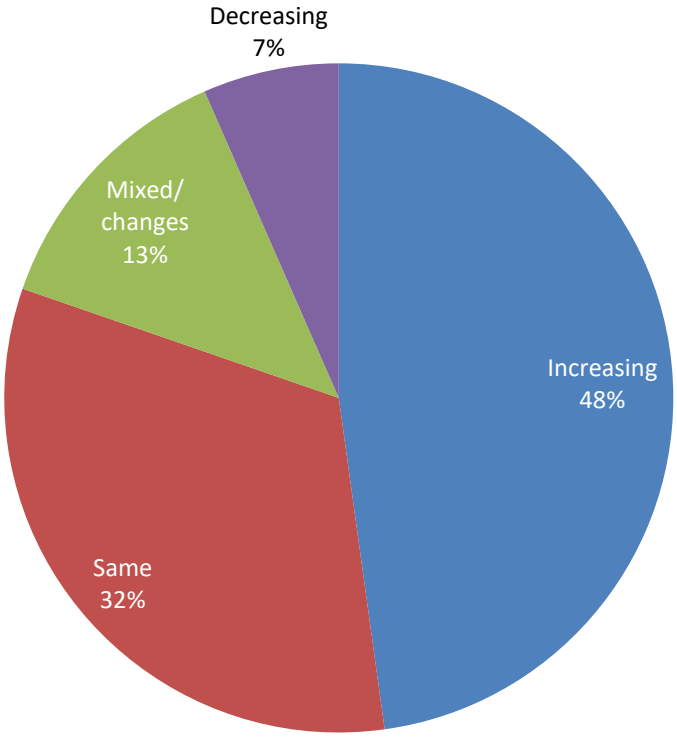
Apart from the visitation returns and the 1851 religious census, no formal records of congregation size for any of the churches in this study exist for the nineteenth century. Of the relevant service registers that have survived, all date from the 1870s or later and none records congregation size. From 1854 to the end of the century all visitation returns asked ministers whether or not attendance at the parish church had increased, and their replies are presented in Graph 5-23 and Graph 5-24 (p. 364; blank responses have been omitted). In terms of measuring actual change, the overall vagueness of the question makes the responses difficult to cite as evidence

[157] Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, pp. 53–56.

Graph 5-23 Change in congregation size assessment, 1854–99



Graph 5-24 Average congregation size, 1854–99



that congregations were only declining in a small number of churches. But what they do establish is that overall the ministers completing these returns were quite positive in the way they approached this question. As will be seen, in the second half of the century where this can be better assessed, their positivity was not unwarranted.

Absenteeism

With the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, compulsory attendance at Church of England services effectively ceased.[158] Although the legislation technically exempted only Trinitarian protestant dissenters, the practical difficulties in distinguishing between sincere objectors and lax churchgoers made it very difficult for Church officials formally to prosecute non-attendees.[159] By the second half of the eighteenth century instances of a defaulter being required by an ecclesiastical court to present certificates of church attendance were rare, and the latest known instance took place in 1807.[160]

By 1738, it was concern over unchecked absenteeism that initially motivated Bishop Secker of Oxford, soon followed by other bishops, to include a question in their visitation returns on 'persons who absent themselves from all Public worship'.[161] In Oxfordshire this question continued to be asked until 1823. From 1872–78, however,

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158 Field, Clive D., *Periodizing Secularization: Religious Allegiance and Attendance in Britain, 1880–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

159 Clive D. Field, 'A Shilling for Queen Elizabeth: the Era of State Regulation of Church Attendance in England, 1552–1969', *Journal of Church and State,* 50/2 (2008), p. 222.

160 Arthur Warne, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century Devon* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1969), p. 76.

161 Clive D. Field, 'Counting Religion in England and Wales: the Long Eighteenth Century, c.1680–c.1840', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 63/4 (2012), p. 716; text from wording as in visitation returns 1802–23.

it was reintroduced by the bishop, perhaps to help assess a concern that the National Agricultural Labourers' Union's activities were reducing Anglican church attendance, especially in Oxfordshire's rural parishes.[162] At this time Mackarness had been particularly agitated by this issue, claiming that meetings conspiring against the Church were being held in hundreds of parishes, and that newspapers were 'week after week … and column after column … filled with abuse, eked out indeed by absurd and fantastic statements' on this topic.[163]

Responses from visitation returns for each of these two sets of years have been aggregated and classified under six discrete types: no response, none, none known, cannot say, some, and many. With one exception this follows the same rubric Clive Field uses in his own publications on answers to this question, and his absentee numbers taken from five eighteenth-century visitations are provided in Graph 5-25 (p. 367).[164] From its eighteenth-century origins officiating ministers struggled to supply accurate responses to this question, [165] and so must be interpreted cautiously.

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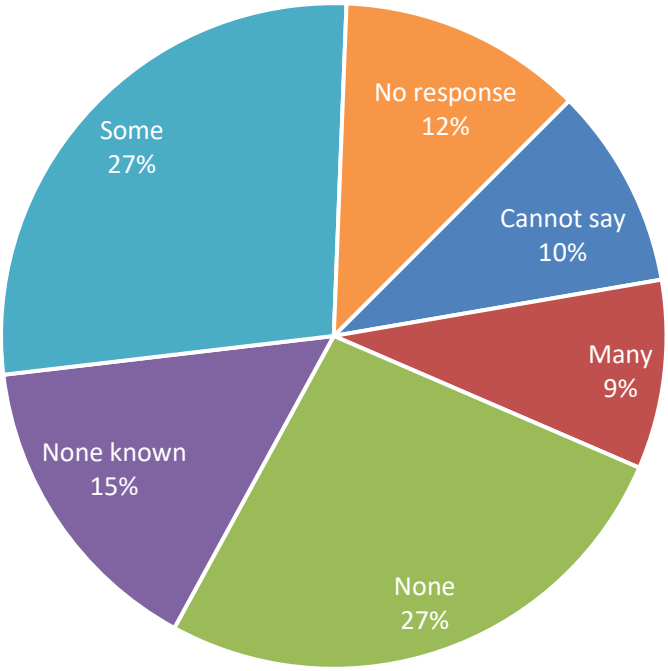
162 Pamela Horn, 'Introduction', in Pamela Horn, (ed.), *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, 1872–81* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1974), pp. 14, 18, 131–38; see also McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy*, pp. 199–200; the possibility of this connection is first noted in Field, 'A Godly People?', pp. 58–59.

163 John Fielder Mackarness, 'The Church's Duty in Regard to Strikes and Labour', *CC* (1873).

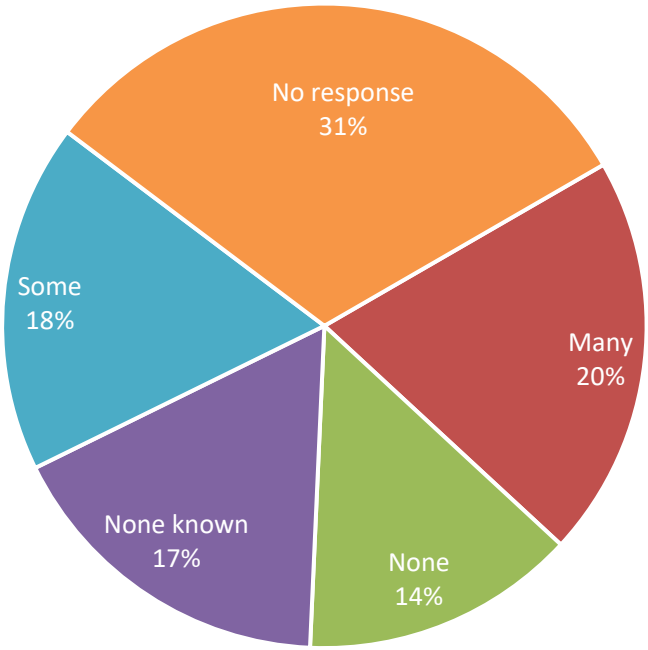
164 I have renamed Field's category 'ambiguous answer' to 'cannot say' as this more accurately summarizes the language in the responses in this study; for his work on eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Oxfordshire see Field, 'A Godly People?', pp. 49–54; for a summary of eighteenth-century returns for Oxfordshire see Field, '*Status animarum*'; for a summary that includes other dioceses see Clive D. Field, 'Churchgoing in the Cradle of English Christianity: Kentish Evidence from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 128 (2008), p. 342.

165 Field, 'Counting Religion', p. 716.

Graph 5-25 Absentees, average of years 1738, 1759, 1771, 1774, 1793 (from Field, Oxfordshire parishes)



Graph 5-26 Parishes in this review: absentees, 1802–23



Ministers were being required to supply details on people within the parish whom they were less likely to encounter, especially if they regarded their duty as being the provision of the service and little else. In urban parishes where the parochial system was under strain, and especially among Oxford's fast-growing nineteenth-century population, even estimating a figure would have been difficult.

In the returns up to 1823 (Graph 5-26, p. 367) 31% ignored the question entirely, and it is possible that among this group were ministers who had neither the knowledge nor the inclination to research and provide an informed response. A fifth of the returns noted that there were 'many' in the parish who never attended church: the parishes most regularly offering this response were St Mary Magdalen, St Ebbe, and St Giles. In only a few of these returns were any details beyond the word 'many' provided. Perhaps the very small population of Binsey and its distance from town made it easier for its perpetual curate to judge that 20 people, just under a third of the parish, never attended.[166] In one instance for St Mary Magdalen it was estimated that half of the parish were absent (about 500 people)[167] and at St Thomas it was estimated in 1814 that 90% of the parishioners (over 1,000) never attended church.[168]

Reconciling these very high estimates with the remaining 49% of responses poses difficulties. 14% of ministers claimed that there were no absentees, 17% qualified this response to note that there was none 'that they knew', and 18% of the parishes

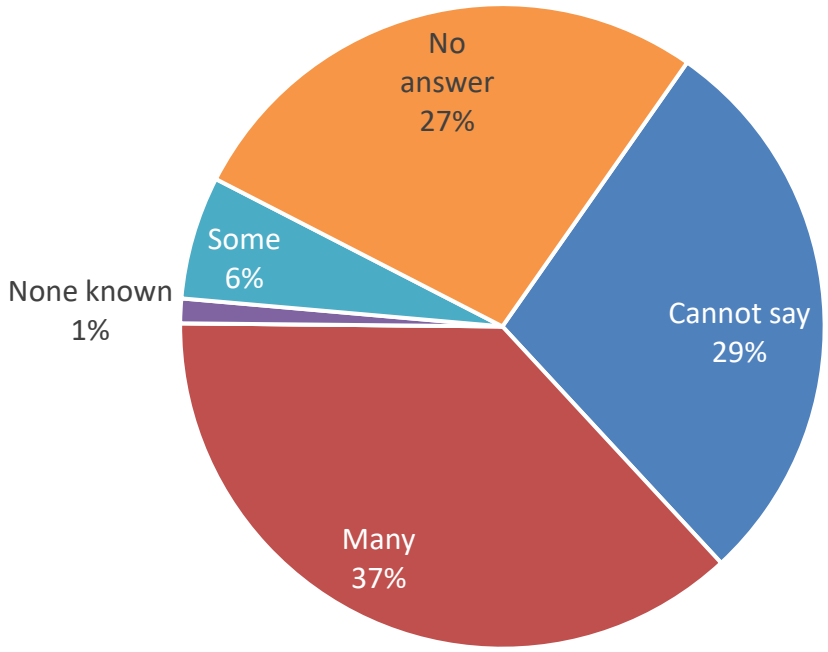
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166 VR 1814, Binsey counted 70 people; the 1811 census counted 66 people.

167 VR 1817, St Mary Magdalen.

168 VR 1814, St Thomas; in all other returns 1801–23 the question on absentees was left blank for this parish.

Graph 5-27 Parishes in this review: absentees, 1872–78



recorded that there were only very few absentees. The parishes of Oxford were differentiated by class, wealth, and religious fervour, but it strains credulity that one parish would be overwhelmingly inhabited by absentees and a nearby parish have 'none', or very few.[169] The later responses from the 1870s are both more and less clear (Graph 5-27). The proportion of parishes leaving the absentee question blank remained relatively unchanged, and these blank responses are open to interpretations similar to those for 1802–23. However, in this period no ministers claimed that there were no absentees in their parish, and 29% of questionnaires declared it was impossible to answer the question at all. A main reason for not providing a figure, or for leaving the question blank, could be that there were too

169 Such as at VR St Thomas 1814, 9/10ths of the parish were recorded as absentees, yet at St Clement there were 'none' absent; see VRs 1814, St Thomas and St Clement.

many absentees for a minister to monitor. At St Barnabas it was noted that 'it is impossible to say exactly',[170] at St Peter-le-Bailey and St Frideswide it was stated that their populations were constantly shifting, making a count too difficult,[171] and at St Mary Oxford it was noted that that there were too many strangers to provide an answer,[172] further evidence that the parochial system was struggling to operate in these urban parishes.

Almost twice as many parishes as in the first quarter of the century replied that they had 'many' absentees, but unlike the responses from the start of the century more ministers provided a number. Evangelical William Barlow (rector, St Ebbe 1873–75) noted in his 1875 reply that even though his responses were estimates — he had calculated that roughly a third of St Ebbe attended his church at least some of the time, a third were dissenters who did not visit, and a third attended nowhere — he had arrived at these figures after first visiting every house in the parish at least twice over 18 months.[173] St Mary Magdalen likewise estimated a third of their parishioners being absent,[174] at St Paul one in four parishioners never attended,[175] Holy Trinity St Ebbe counted 415 absentees,[176] and at Iffley there were estimated to be between 60 and 70.[177] At Littlemore in 1872 it was noted that about 100 individuals were absent,

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170 VR 1875, St Barnabas.
171 VRs 1872, 1875, St Peter-le-Bailey; VR 1878, St Frideswide.
172 VR 1878, St Mary Oxford.
173 VR 1875, St Ebbe.
174 VR 1875, St Ebbe; VR 1878, St Mary Magdalen.
175 VR 1872, St Paul.
176 VR 1875, Holy Trinity St Ebbe.
177 VR 1875, Iffley.

but by 1875 the absentees had dropped to 75, explained as the result of their recent Lenten mission.[178]

To better understand the answers from both the start of the century and the 1870s onwards other possible influences must be considered. It may be that when ministers responded in the negative, they were choosing to limit the question to 'anyone of note': a qualification included within the question on counting dissenters but not explicitly noted for non-attenders. Two potential examples from 1802 where such a qualification might have been applied were at St Giles, where it was recorded that 'one whose situation in life makes his absence a matter of real concern',[179] and at St Aldate, where the curate wrote that no one was absent, but paradoxically added that 'I cannot help noticing that I have not observed any of the Alms Men to have attended the Church since I have served it'.[180] Furthermore, although in the 1870s the question was explicitly worded to distinguish absenteeism from nonconformity, from 1803 to 1823 this distinction had not been clarified. In these earlier returns the question on absenteeism followed a different question on numbers of dissenters and papists, and it is unclear which minister was or was not including these people in his tally of habitual absentees. It was also possible that in some instances an individual from one household was potentially treated by a minister as representing their entire household, even if other family members did not attend. And finally, a reply could be left blank because the minister considered that in this respect his parish represented a pre-established understanding of what was normal for a parish of their sort and

178 VRs 1872, 1875, Littlemore.
179 VR 1802, St Giles.
180 VR 1802, St Aldate.

would only furnish a reply if the numbers for some reason deviated from this pattern and so required further clarification.

Even given these considerations there remains a very small number of other returns that resist interpretation. In 1872 John Burgon reported that in his inner-city parish exactly 58 individuals were frequently absent from any church service. In 1875 the same minister reported that numbers absenting themselves were 'exceedingly few, and even these few, with I believe three or four exceptions, frequent other churches'.[181] No reason is offered to explain this change and it is unclear how best to reconcile the two responses. In his parish letter of 1872, the perpetual curate Coley wrote that anyone who never attended church was in effect a dissenter, 'whether they belong to any particular denomination, or to none at all', and as such the matter was 'quite useless for [him] to address'.[182]

Sunday scholars

In some of the churches in this review children attended at least part of a general Sunday service in the main church building, frequently sitting in designated benches that were narrower and closer together to make the best use of available space. These benches were often in less desirable corners of the church with restricted visibility, either very close to the chancel, at the back of the church, or in a gallery (Image 5-5 and Image 5-6,[183] p. 373).

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181 VRs 1872, 1875, St Mary Oxford.

182 James Coley, *To the Parishioners of Cowley* (Oxford: W.R. Bowden, 1872), p. 5 [Advent letter].

183 James P. Harrison, LPL, ICBS 4140 [id ICBS04140]: detail of ground plan, St George the Martyr; and S.S. Teulon, LPL, ICBS 7176 [id ICBS07176a]: detail of ground plan, St Frideswide.

Image 5-5 Detail of ground plan, St George, 1849, green highlighted seating reserved for Sunday scholars.

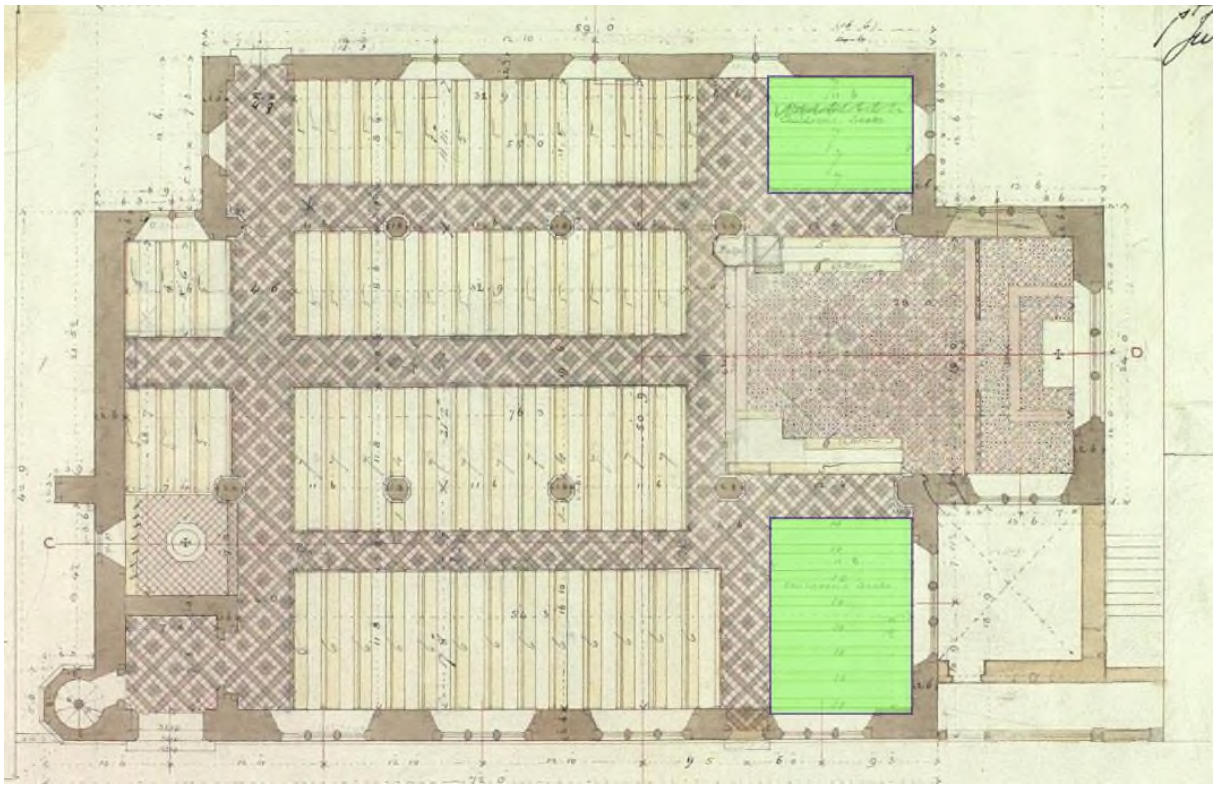
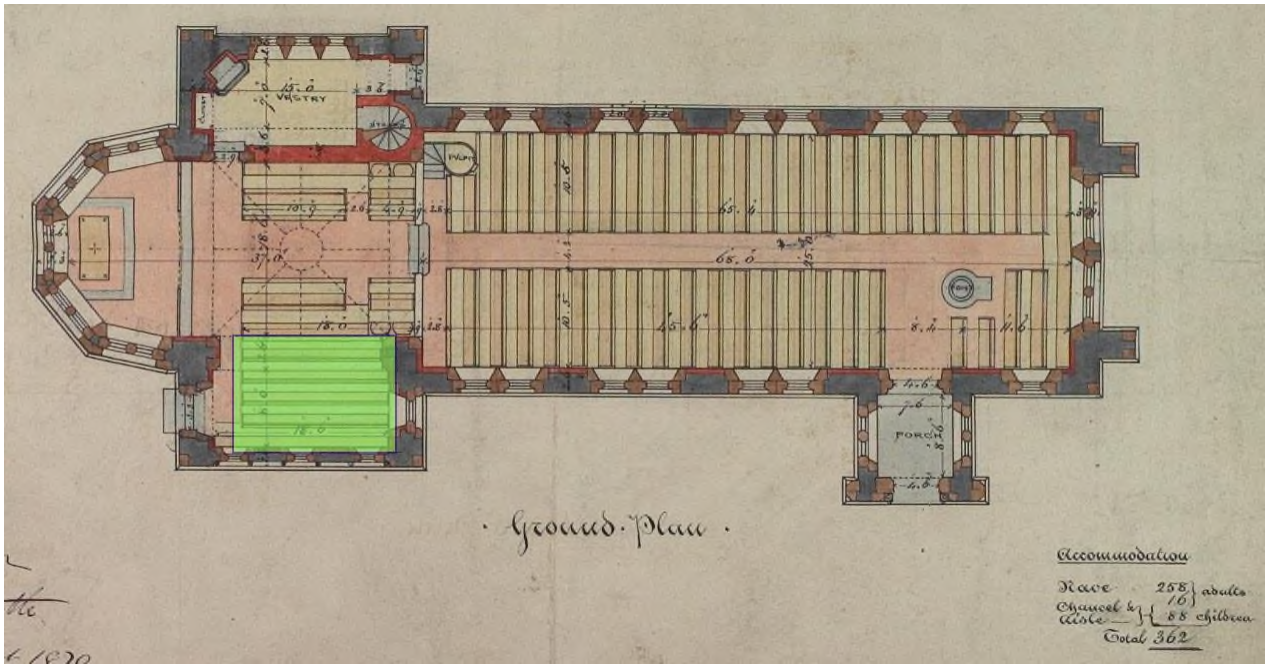


Image 5-6 Detail of ground plan, St Frideswide, 1870, green highlighted seating reserved for Sunday scholars.



As discussed above, however, the pew system often meant there was insufficient space to seat all parishioners, especially poorer families, and many parishes were issued a licence from their bishop to hold a Sunday service in the parish school not just for Sunday scholars but also for adults.

As with mission churches and mission halls, it is mostly not possible to know how many adults attended these services, but where included numbers were reasonably high. In 1860, for example, the school in St Clement ran a service where the average weekly congregation size was about 300.[184] At St Giles only a small proportion of sittings were free and made available to the poor, which meant that many parishioners who could not afford rental pews instead attended services at the local National School for Boys.[185] Services at the school were organized by the parochial clergy and ran at the same time as the main morning service at the church; in 1875 it was reported as being full every Sunday.[186]

Sunday scholar numbers, however, were systematically accounted for in visitation returns from 1854 to 1872. A perennial problem identified by Bishop Wilberforce's secretary with the visitation returns was whether or not the number of attendances in the return included children.[187] With nearly all the returns in this study from 1854 to 1869, however, it is clear that Sunday scholars were consistently counted separately. This is fortuitous because it is between these years that data on service

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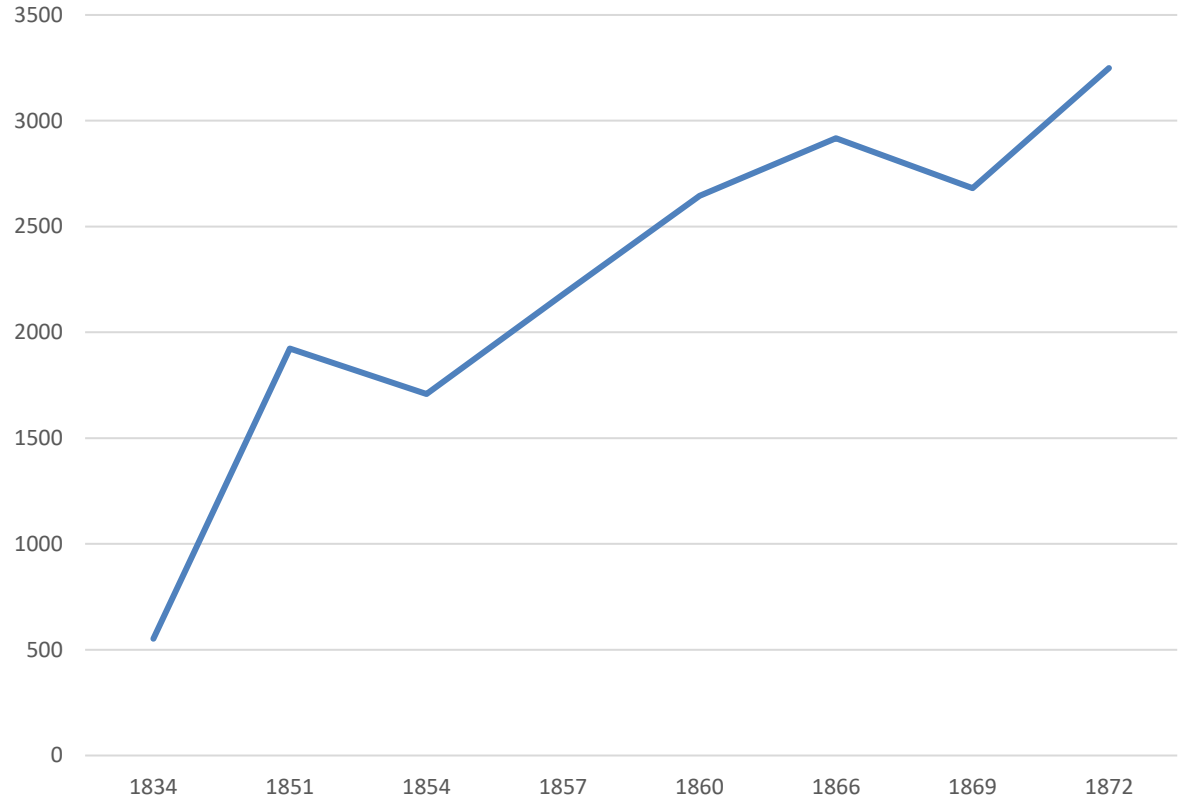
184 VR 1860, St Clement; services at the school room are listed in VRs 1887, 1890, but without attendance numbers.

185 VR 1834, St Giles.

186 VR 1875, St Giles.

187 'The Bishop of Oxford's Visitation, 1866: a Statistical Abstract', OHC, Oxf. dioc. papers, c.332 [by John Davenport], final page.

Graph 5-28 Sunday scholars, all parishes, 1834–72



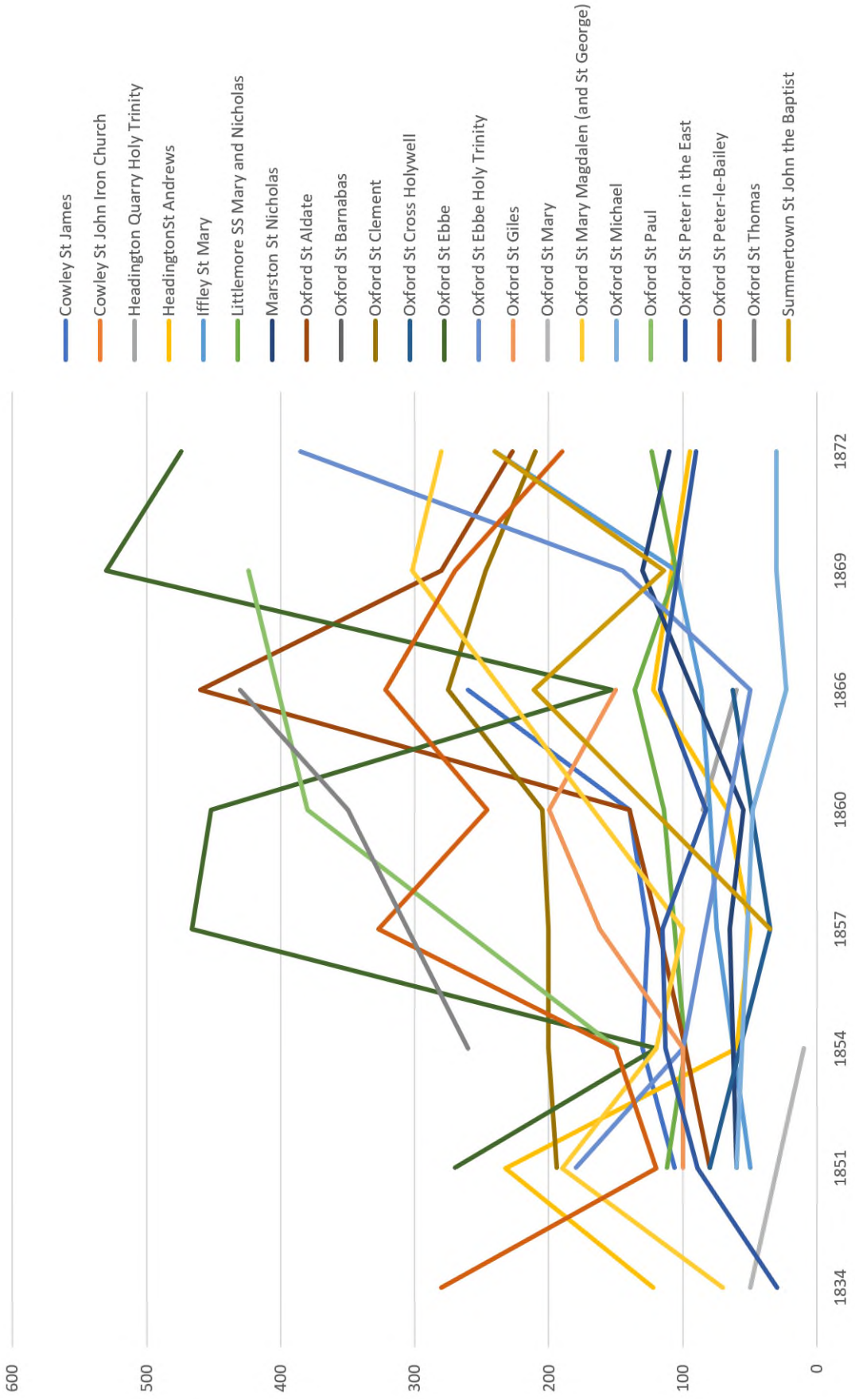
attendance were also included, making it possible, later in this chapter, to provide a more accurate count of people attending Sunday services in the parishes in this review.

These numbers are graphed in Graph 5-28 and Graph 5-29 (p. 376), and it is evident that over that time the number of children attending an Anglican Sunday service almost doubled.[188] The number of children attending Sunday school was consistently higher than the number of children attending daily school,[189] and in almost all

188 Numbers are lower in 1834 because only five parishes supplied numbers.

189 At St Aldate in 1869, for example, only 68 of the 130 boy Sunday scholars also attended daily school, as did 53 of the 103 girls and 23 of the 74 infants; see VR 1869, St Aldate.

Graph 5-29 Sunday school scholars, 1834–72



instances teachers from the daily school also taught at the Sunday school. Records after 1872 indicate that, for some churches at least, Sunday schools continued to grow for the rest of the century.

Running these classes would have been logistically complex, and 71 returns refer to weekly or monthly evening meetings for all the teachers to help prepare the Sunday school programme. In the final decade of the century evangelical churches in particular were running very large operations on Sunday: in 1896 St Aldate had 90 Sunday school volunteers (30 male and 60 female), St Ebbe had 70 teachers (25 male and 45 female), and St Clement 42 teachers (9 male 33 female).[190] At St Barnabas what was termed its 'Sunday club' was managed by a relatively small number of teachers: 18 female teachers, nine male teachers, and three clergy, who taught 550 children on Sundays in 1881, 660 children in 1884, and 777 children in 1890.[191]

Congregation size

The first Oxford visitation to enquire about congregation size — asking for a 'general number' — was in 1834. Regardless of the degree to which Oxford's nineteenth-century bishops wished to know how many people attended Anglican churches, none of them managed to instigate a system that would allow them to determine an accurate sum.

The bishop who came closest to this was Wilberforce, and from 1854 to 1869 ministers were requested to provide an 'average number' of their Sunday

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190 VRs 1896, St Aldate, St Ebbe, St Clement.
191 VRs 1881, 1884, 1890, St Barnabas.

congregation. Wilberforce's questions on church attendances were a response to his misgivings about the 1851 religious census. Despite this, Wilberforce never overcame some of the pragmatic problems that arose when trying to calculate average attendances.

That measuring churchgoing comparatively over time is not straightforward has already been recognized,[192] and interpreting the replies for 1834 and then from 1854 to 1869 raises complications that will now be addressed. As a rule, it seems most clergy did not systematically count congregation size, and the most probable way ministers estimated a number was visually, from recollecting how a Sunday service filled up the pews and benches in the church. Such approximations inform the clergy's accounts of attendance in the returns. For example, John Burgon wrote that he had 'never counted [congregation size] but the lower part of church [was] nearly *full* on Sunday morning; *quite* full on a Sunday evening, and perhaps a 100 or so in the galleries'.[193] Replies such as these were frequently used in place of a number.[194]

The larger the congregation size, the harder it was for average attendances to be calculated, and churches providing more Sunday services found it even more difficult to identify possible 'twicers': people who attended more than one service in a day. A congregation size could fluctuate from one week to the next depending on several factors, notably whether a monthly communion was being celebrated, if it was a holy

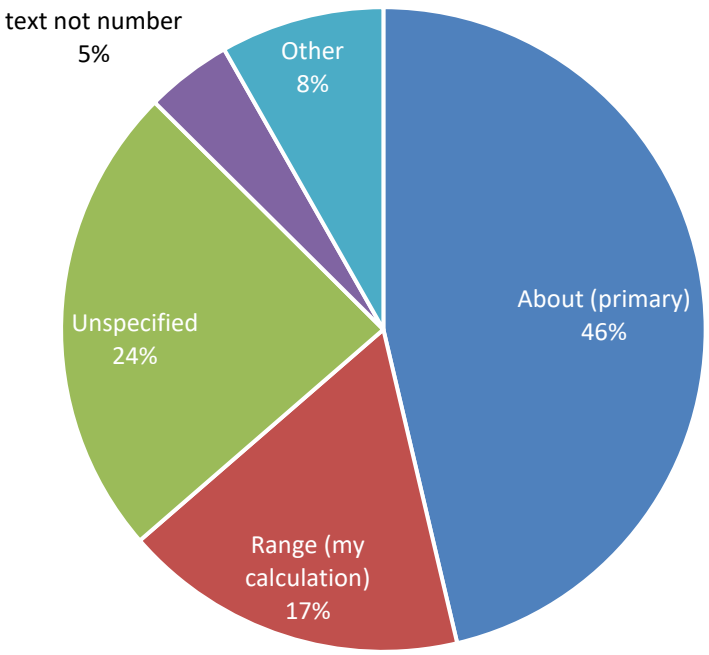
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192 Field, *Periodizing Secularization*, p. 34.

193 VR 1869, St Mary Oxford.

194 See for example Table 5-4, which includes descriptions that are often used instead of a number.

Graph 5-30 Exactitude of number for Sunday service attendance



day, if there was a popular guest preacher, or if the weather was inclement.[195] Local circumstances could also result in significant variations. An unexpected death, the marriage of a well-known parishioner, anxiety over scarcity of food, or church investment of time and resources in a special mission drive, were all instances that affected attendance numbers. It is likely that ministers defined average attendance by the number of attendees on an 'ordinary Sunday' when nothing would unusually raise the count, and not as a strict average of a year's services.

When filling in their returns, most clergy qualified the numbers that they entered to indicate how they ought to be interpreted (Graph 5-30). 54% were described as estimates or rounded numbers; most were described as 'about' or an equivalent, such

[195] VR 1851, St Cross, 'A violent storm thinned the congregation below the usual number'.

as 'Never counted. Probably more than 300'.[196] Many provided a range, which raises further ambiguities.

At St Aldate in 1857, for example (Table 5-4), the minister recorded numbers for Sunday worship of 300 to 400, without indicating which service or services he was specifying. For the purposes of this study, all figures given as a range have been resolved into an average of the two numbers, but two very different interpretations are also possible. The range could mean that about 300 people attended the morning service and 400 the evening service, or it could represent an estimated number of attendees for all the services, rather than attendances.

Table 5-4 St Aldate: Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Year	Service type		How number recorded
1834	Sunday morning	300	'Perhaps 300'
	Sunday afternoon	200	'about 200'
1851	Sunday morning	320	
	Sunday afternoon	350	
1854	Sunday morning weekly	450	from 400 to 500
	Sunday afternoon weekly	200	
1857	Sunday weekly	350	300 to 400
1860	Sunday morning weekly	286	'Trinity Sunday counted Morning 286 afternoon 173 evening 335, average, say, 300 at all divine services'
	Sunday afternoon weekly	173	
	Sunday evening weekly	335	
1866	Sunday weekly	700	
1869	Sunday weekly	700	

The most problematic ambiguity, however, concerns whether a number refers to a single service or a total of two or more Sunday services. Data from four churches will be examined to clarify the confusion of issues that arise.

[196] VR 1866, St Peter in the East.

Table 5-5 Congregation totals in four sample parishes, 1834–69

Church	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
St Peter-le-Bailey	165	660	550	850	500	1300	450
St Peter in the East	275	990	550	300	Text (1140)	300	550
St Paul			1000		1100	600	Text (700)
St Nicholas Marston		75	115	130	120	100	255

Table 5-5 lists the congregation sizes for four sample churches over seven visitations, which in turn are depicted in Graph 5-31. Congregation sizes at St Peter-le-Bailey and St Peter in the East, seem to have fluctuated quite substantially from one visitation to the next. At St Paul numbers rose a little until 1860, following which there was a significant decline. Finally, at St Nicholas Marston the congregation

Graph 5-31 Congregation size: four sample parishes

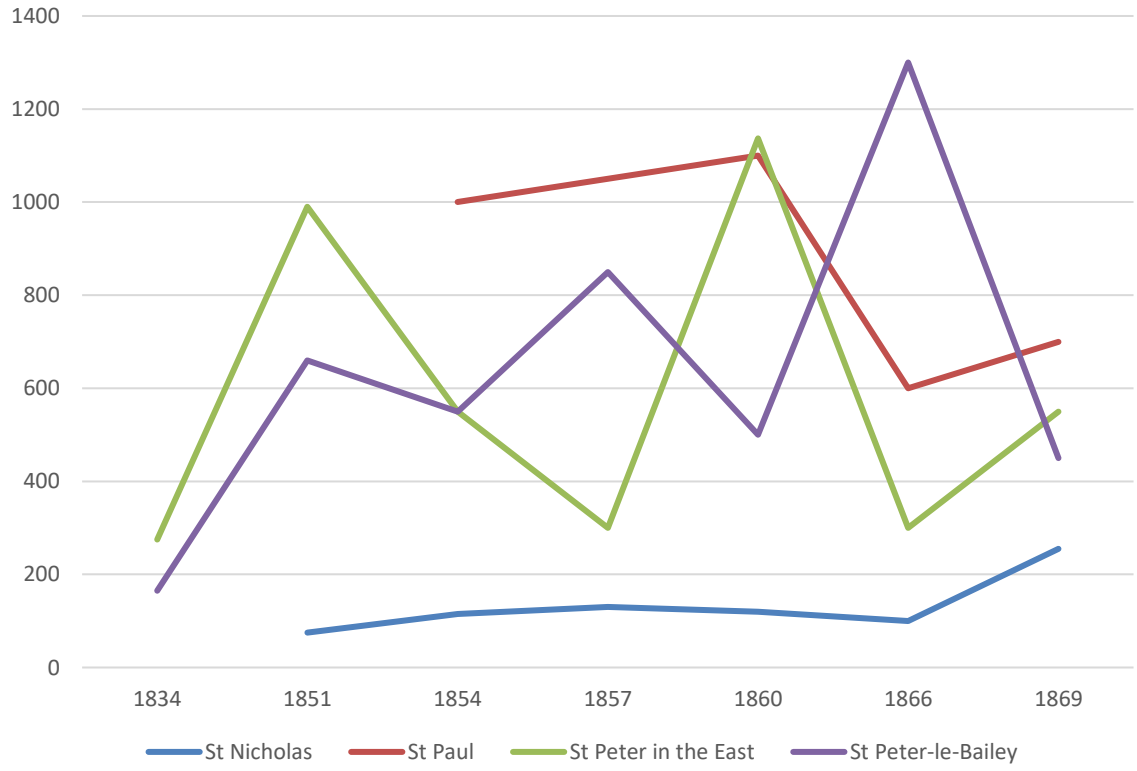


Table 5-6 St Peter-le-Bailey: Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Church/service	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
St Peter-le-Bailey: no. of Sunday services	2		2	2	3	3	3
Sunday morning weekly	85	160	200	400		500	
Sunday afternoon weekly	80					300	
Sunday evening weekly		500	350	450		500	
Sunday weekly					500		450
Weekly average total	165	660	550	850	500	1300	450

remained quite steady, with a rise in numbers between 1866 and 1869. Closer analysis, however, challenges all four of these interpretations.

The returns for St Peter-le-Bailey 1857–69 were completed by the same minister, Henry Linton. In Table 5-6 the highlighted weekly totals for 1860 and 1869 are considerably lower than the other returns. 1860 and 1869, however, are also the only two years where a single number was given, rather than a breakdown of two or three Sunday services. When the numbers of all the years are considered alongside each other it is possible, even more likely, that the 1860 and 1866 figures only count one Sunday service.

A similar logic can be applied to the congregation sizes at St Peter in the East (Table 5-7, p. 383), where the numbers highlighted in yellow are counting one service only (responses in text have been converted to numbers). This interpretation presents a more consistent congregation size.

Table 5-7 St Peter in the East: Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Church/service	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
St Peter in the East: no. of Sunday services	2		4	4	3	3	3
Sunday morning	275	450			'full' [650]		
Sunday afternoon	smaller	90			'¾ full' [490]		
Sunday evening		450					
Sunday weekly			550	300		300	550
Weekly average total	275	990	550	300	1140[197]	300	550

Table 5-8 St Paul: Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Church/service	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
St Paul: no. of Sunday services			5		5	6	2
Sunday morning weekly			400		450		
Sunday evening weekly			600		650		
Sunday weekly						600	'full' [700]
Weekly average total			1000		1100	600	700[198]

At St Paul (Table 5-8)the same approach can be applied, because again the much lower number coincides with the return not mentioning attendance at its other services.

Table 5-9 St Nicholas: Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Church/service	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
St Nicholas: no. of Sunday services	2		2	2	3	3	2
Sunday morning		75	40			30	55
Sunday afternoon weekly			75			70	200
Sunday weekly				130	120		
Weekly average total		75	115	130	120	100	255

197 Average number calculated from non-numerical descriptions using sitting capacity.

198 Average number calculated from non-numerical descriptions using seating capacity.

Numbers from St Nicholas Marston, however, raise an important challenge to this approach (Table 5-9, p. 383). All returns were completed by the same person, Richard Gordon (vicar, St Nicholas, 1849–77). For 1854, 1866, and 1869 numbers were given separately for the morning and afternoon service, but for 1857 and 1860 a single number only was submitted. For this church it seems intuitively reasonable to treat the 1857 and 1860 figures — both higher than the combined totals for 1861, 1855, and 1866 — as recording a single service only. The numbers for 1869, however, confound this argument entirely since they show a significant increase of attendances at the afternoon service.[199]

Because congregation numbers can rise and fall, sometimes quite sharply, resolving ambiguity is problematic. A key concern is that the logic is partly circular: the premise that it is less likely that congregation levels would greatly fluctuate, rather than remain more or less the same, is necessarily being extrapolated from the very evidence it is querying. This issue is not resolvable, which is why the final figures concerning congregation size in this thesis will exist within a range.

Table 5-10 (p. 385) lists the 19 churches in this review that supplied attendance numbers three or more times between 1834 and 1869. When these figures are compared from one visitation to the next, in 86% of the returns where only one number was provided the number is lower — and usually significantly so — than totals of services in visitation returns for the same church that provided numbers for more than one service. It seems that when returns provided a single number, it was

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199 VR 1869, St Nicholas Marston; the congregation for the afternoon service was 'rather over 200 exclusive of children'.

Table 5-10 Sunday service attendance, 1834–69

Yellow: one number given; tan: sum for two specified services; green: sum for three specified services. * indicates instances where a single number was provided that was considerably lower than totals from two services in the visitation returns that preceded and followed, suggesting it counts one service only.

Church	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
All Saints Oxford		390	150*	250*	200*	225*	455
Holy Trinity Headington Quarry		145	90	65*	55*	105*	100*
St Aldate	500	670	650	350*	794	700	700
St Andrew Headington	550	535	535	165*			410
St Clement	350*	420		1000	600		350*
St Ebbe	800	885	500	300*	500*	650	
St Giles	850	520		600*	1350	600*	
St James Cowley	500	354	250*	400	270*	550	450
St John the Baptist Summertown		500	300*	250*	350*		600
St Margaret Binsey	20*	40	20*	15*	15*	13*	
St Martin (Carfax)	350*	635	1050		1150	350*	
SS Mary and Nicholas		300	120*	150*	100*	175*	190*
St Mary Magdalen	550*	560	250*	1200	750		325*
St Mary the Virgin	650		250*				850
St Mary the Virgin Iffley		130*	250*	250*	240*	250*	250*
St Nicholas		75*	115	130	120	100	255
St Peter-le-Bailey	165	660	550	850	500*	1300	450*
St Peter in the East	450	990	550*	300*	900	300*	550*
St Thomas the Martyr	775	1250	650*	600*	600*	550*	600*

much more likely that the number counted one service only, and not a total of two or more services.

Why did so many churches provide numbers for only one service? As will be discussed below, it is likely that this is what Wilberforce (mostly) wanted. It is possible that for some clergy a class-conscious bias led to working-class attendees not being counted, especially in the first half of the century. Visitation questions on dissent and absenteeism were often limited to 'anyone of note' in the parish, and it seems that many churches had a congregational culture where morning services catered for the middle classes and gentry, and children and working classes in the

afternoon or evening. In these arrangements, the smaller figure for the morning service was provided, and the larger congregation for the afternoon or evening service was not. As previously shown, in several churches this was reinforced by pew arrangements, where pews were reserved for their owners in the morning, but were unlocked in the evening to give free access to the lower orders. This was a common approach: at St Ebbe it was noted that there were 'more poor in the afternoon, and more of better order in the morning',[200] suggesting that ministers saw the 'main' service as the morning one, hence the one to cite in the return even if fewer people were present. Bishop Wilberforce at times demonstrated a greater interest in the morning service, noting dismissively at St Giles that the 'lower tradesmen very loose as to Church hardly attend except aft[ernoon]'.[201] It is possible a similar bias was at work when considering the inclusion of people attending mission halls and churches. Considering these factors has significant implications for church studies that calculate attendance figures from returns of only one or two visitations. In such instances, a high degree of caution is required when interpreting these numbers, and an error margin in the region of ±50% should probably be kept in mind.

Church attendance: further analysis

Three different approaches will be followed to help resolve the ambiguities of these data. The first is to use only congregation sizes where a specific service time (morning, afternoon, or evening) is provided over two or more returns from the same church. This makes it as possible as it can be to perform a true like-for-like

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200 VR 1834, St Ebbe.

201 Wilberforce, *Diocese Books of Wilberforce*, p. 245.

comparison. Method two uses numbers for the largest single service in the day, including congregation numbers in Table 5-10 (p. 385) that have been identified as likely to be counting one service only. This helps establish a minimum number of attendees. A third method is to build from the second method by adding to it numbers for a second Sunday service, and applying an average figure when none is available. By taking into account other factors, including a count of Sunday scholars, it will be argued that Method three will supply as accurate a count as possible of how many people attended church on Sunday in the parishes under review from 1834 to 1869.

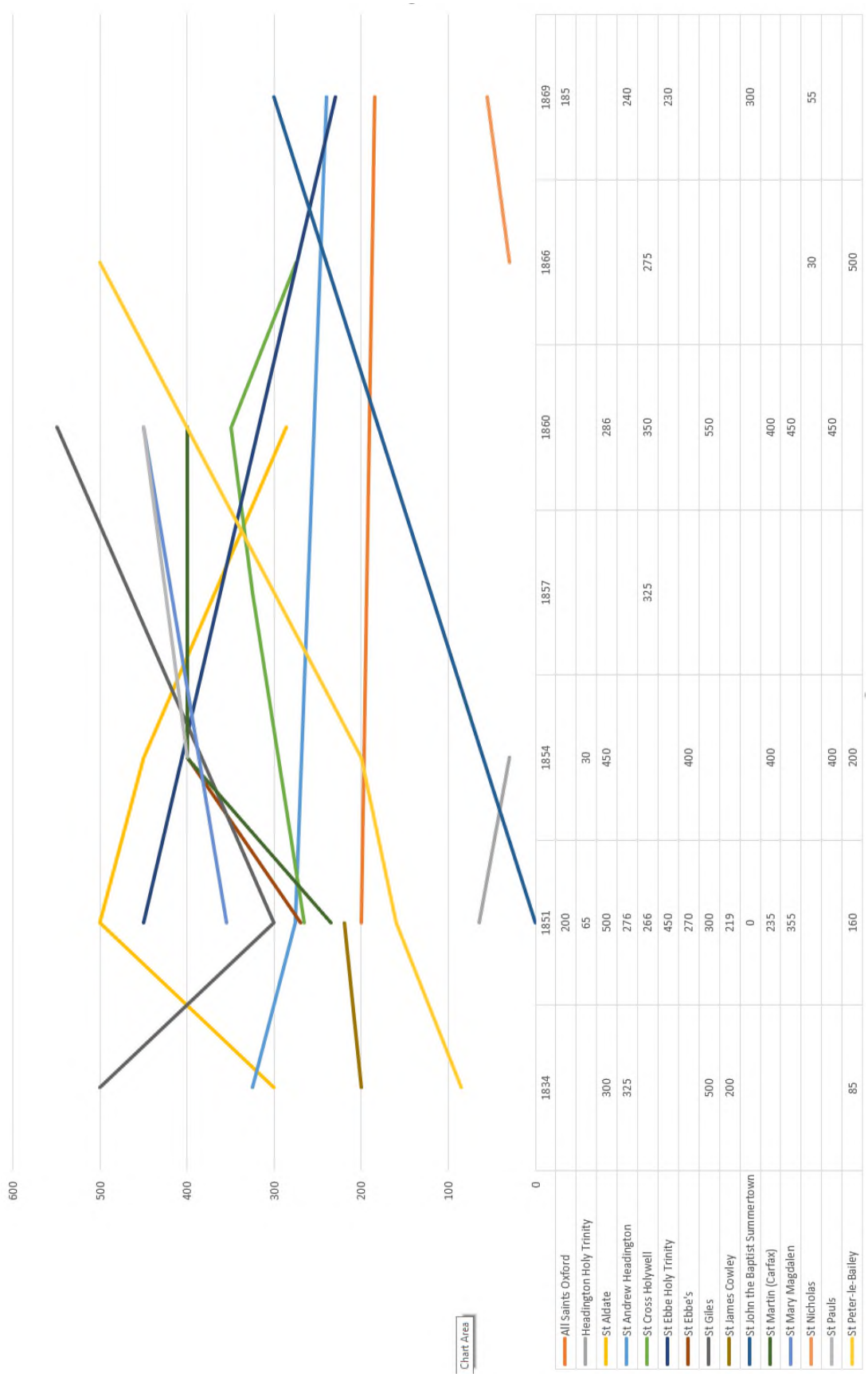
Method one

The main problem with Method one is that once the problematic data is filtered out only a fraction of congregation numbers remain. 49.7% of Sunday congregation numbers in the visitation returns do not specify if the number represents one service, or if it is a total of two or more services. From the remaining 50.3%, however, only 21% of the churches supplied in more than one return congregation sizes that specify which service time the congregation number represents. Overall, there are 15 churches with usable data for morning services, nine for afternoon services, and five for evening services. Furthermore, the measurements of growth or decline are not like-for-like; some counts are three years apart, and others are as much as 18 years apart, as for example figures for Sunday morning services at St John the Baptist Summertown.[202]

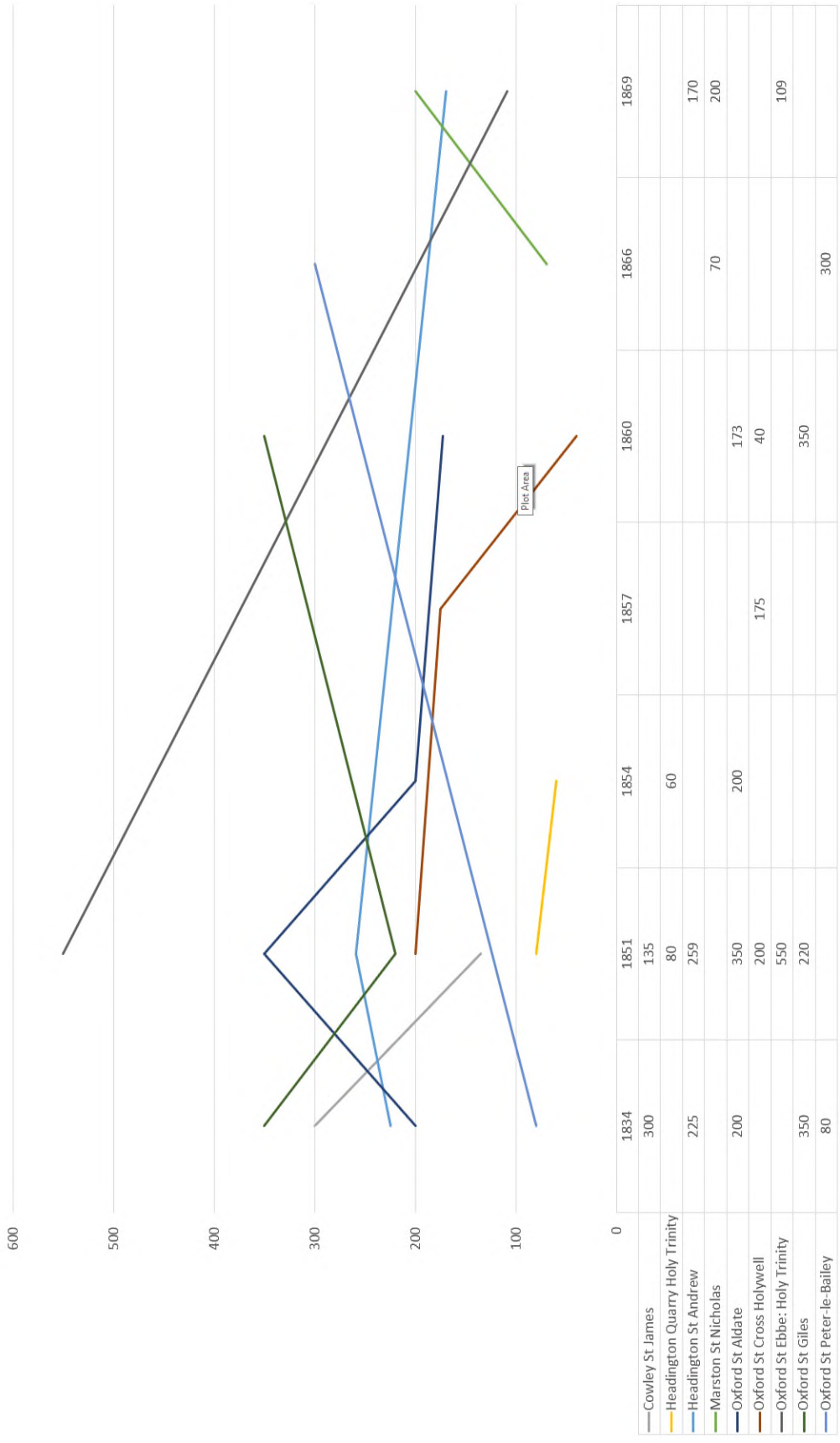
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[202] VRs 1851, 1869, Summertown.

Graph 5-32 Method one: Church attendance, weekly Sunday morning service, 1834–69



Graph 5-33 Method one: Church attendance, weekly Sunday afternoon service, 1834–69



Graph 5-34 Method one: Church attendance, weekly Sunday evening service, 1834–69



	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866
Oxford St Cross Holywell					200	190
Oxford St Ebbe		615	100			
Oxford St Martin Carfax		400	650		750	
Oxford St Paul			600		650	
Oxford St Peter-le-Bailey		500	350	450		500

From 1838 to 1869 Sunday morning services were twice as likely to increase than decrease, and, on average, increases were almost twice as high as decreases were low (Graph 5-32, p. 388). Churches that reported a decline saw attendances drop an average of 33%, while churches reporting an increase saw congregations rise 55%.

Over the same time period, Sunday afternoon services were more likely to report a decrease in attendance (Graph 5-33, p. 389). Again, however, the average decline — 38% — is considerably smaller than the average increase of 85%. Of the still smaller number of churches with sufficient data to compare the evening service, numbers in

three instances declined by 40%, and in five instances increased by 111% (Graph 5-34, p. 390). In terms of church attendances, numbers in the morning increased, and for afternoon and evening services congregation numbers diminished as a percentage but increased in number.

Method two

Method two — only using numbers for the Sunday service with the largest attendance — brings us closer to interpreting the data in the same way the bishop did during visitation. Indeed, a surviving statistical abstract in the hand of Wilberforce's diocesan registrar of answers to selected questions from the 1866 visitation returns, including congregation sizes, provides evidence that the figures he used for calculating the sums in his charges were arrived at by counting in this way: wherever a return had supplied more than one figure only the highest number was counted (Image 5-7)[203] An advantage of this method is that it provides numbers that are definite: there is no risk of overcounting by including 'twicers'. The corollary of this, at least in the case of all the churches in this study, is that it is practically certain that the number is undercounting attendees overall.

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[203] The statistical abstract is mostly easy to follow, although not without some errors. For example, within the parishes in this review the figure for resident communicants at Headington Quarry is copied over as 35, when it ought to be 25; the average number of communicants at Holywell is noted as being 111, but is in fact 113; see 'The Bishop of Oxford's Visitation, 1866: a Statistical Abstract', OHC, Oxf. dioc. papers, c.332 [by John Davenport].

Image 5-7 Statistical abstract for Bishop Wilberforce for 1866 visitation returns

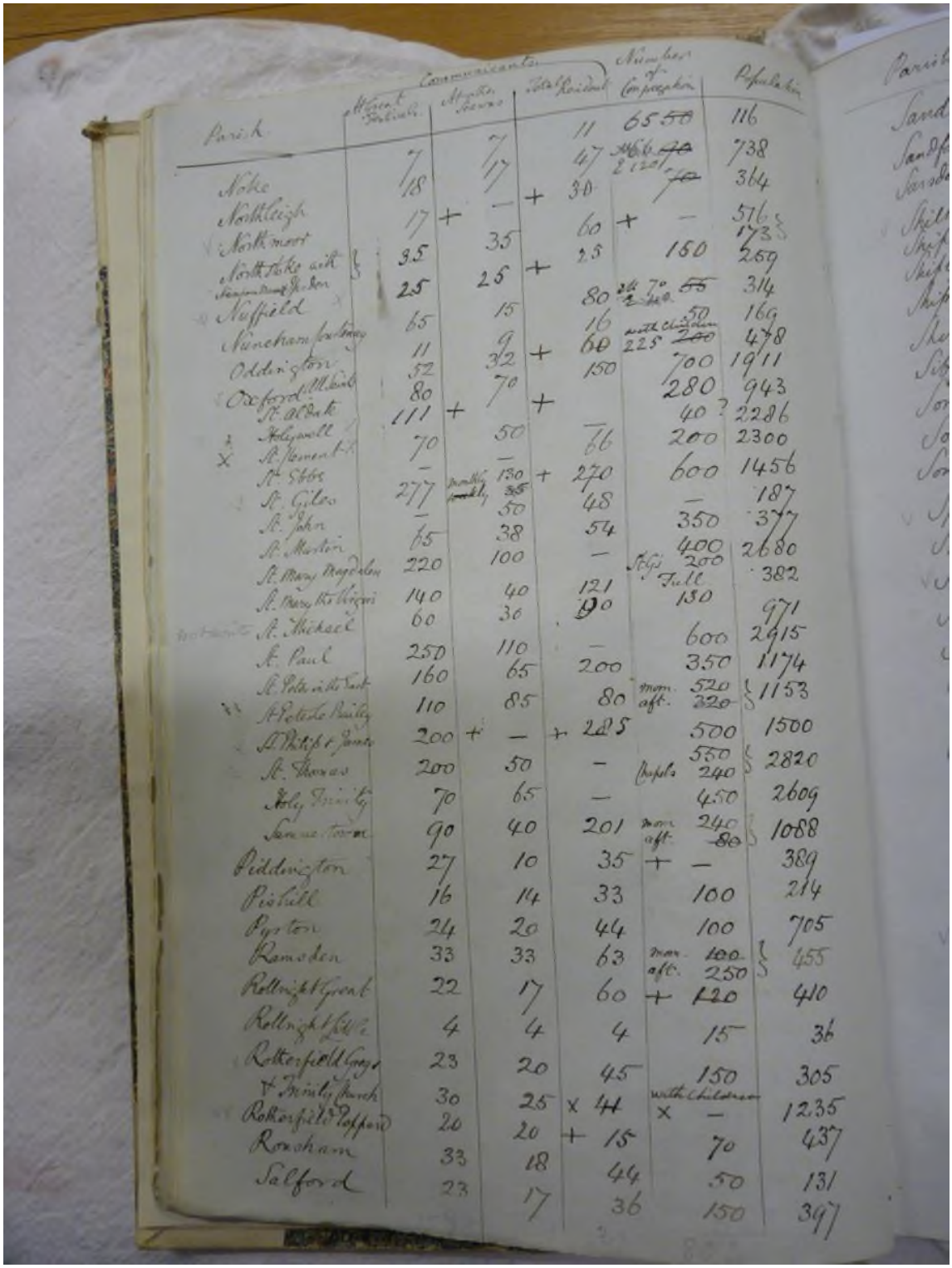


Table 5-11 Method two: largest service

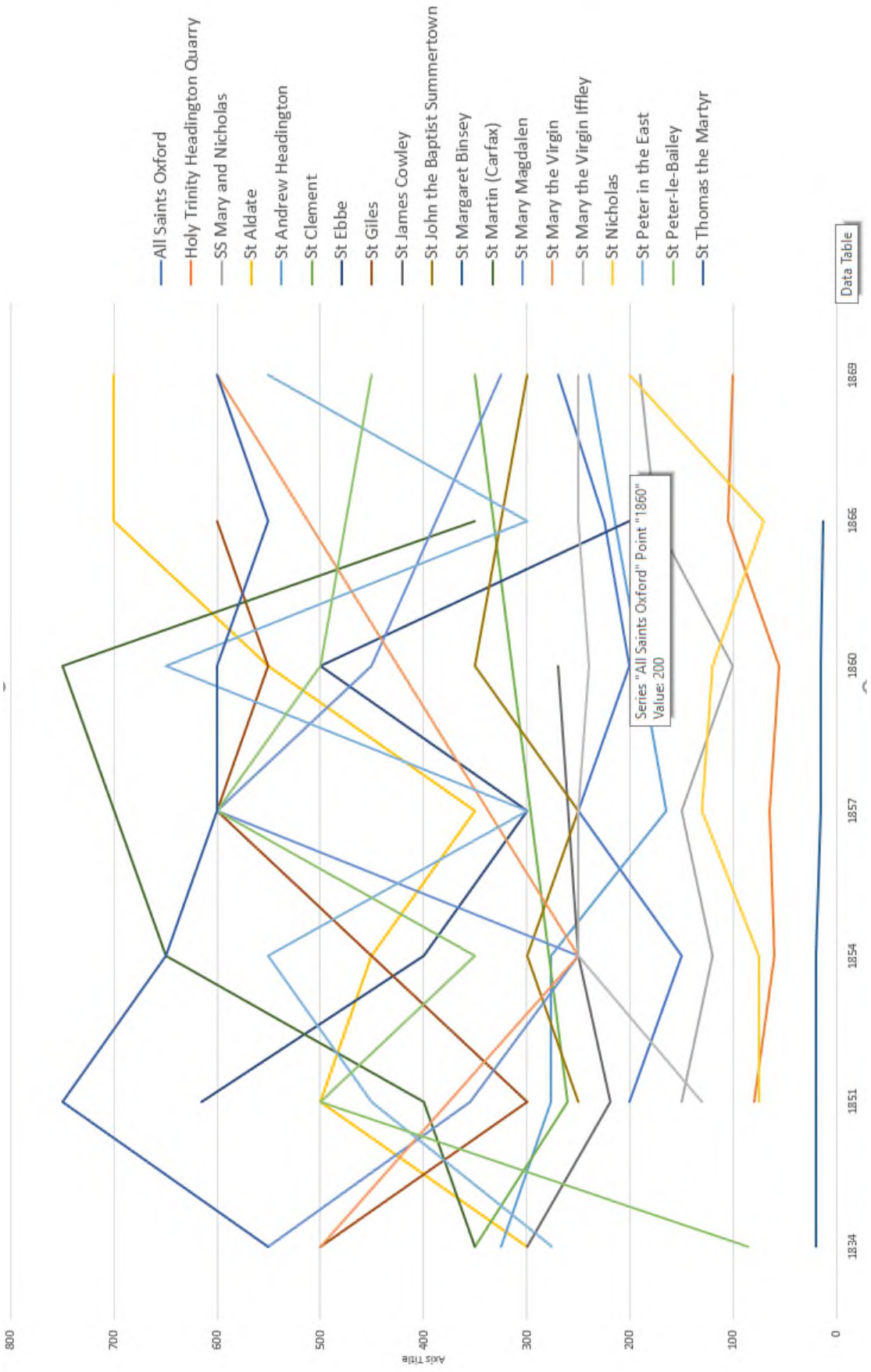
Colours: Green = morning; orange = afternoon; dark blue = evening; grey = unknown

Church	1834	1851	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869
All Saints Oxford		200	150	250	200	225	270
Holy Trinity Headington Quarry		80	60	65	55	105	100
St Aldate	300	500	450	350	550	700	700
St Andrew Headington	325	276	276	165			240
St Clement	350	260					350
St Ebbe		615	400	300	500	200	
St Giles	500	300		600	550	600	
St James Cowley	300	219	250		270		
St John the Baptist Summertown		250	300	250	350		300
St Margaret Binsey	20	20	20	15	15	13	
St Martin (Carfax)	350	400	650		750	350	
SS Mary and Nicholas		150	120	150	100	175	190
St Mary Magdalen	550	355	250	600	450		325
St Mary the Virgin	500		250				600
St Mary the Virgin Iffley		130	250	250	240	250	250
St Nicholas		75	75	130	120	70	200
St Peter-le-Bailey	85	500	350	600	500		450
St Peter in the East	275	450	550	300	650	300	550
St Thomas the Martyr	550	750	650	600	600	550	600

Table 5-11 presents all the data available for the most-attended services. Numbers identified in Method one as being most likely to count one service only are shaded grey in this tally: it is not possible to identify which Sunday service these numbers represent. The data thus obtained are significantly more complete, providing numbers for 77% of the total.

When these are graphed (Graph 5-35, p. 394) the result is a confusing mix of fluctuations, which in itself is revealing and offers a helpful insight: in terms of attendance, the felt experience of the clergy and attendees at a service, even over many years, would not necessarily have created a clear, linear narrative of growth or

Graph 5-35 Method two: church attendance, 1834–69



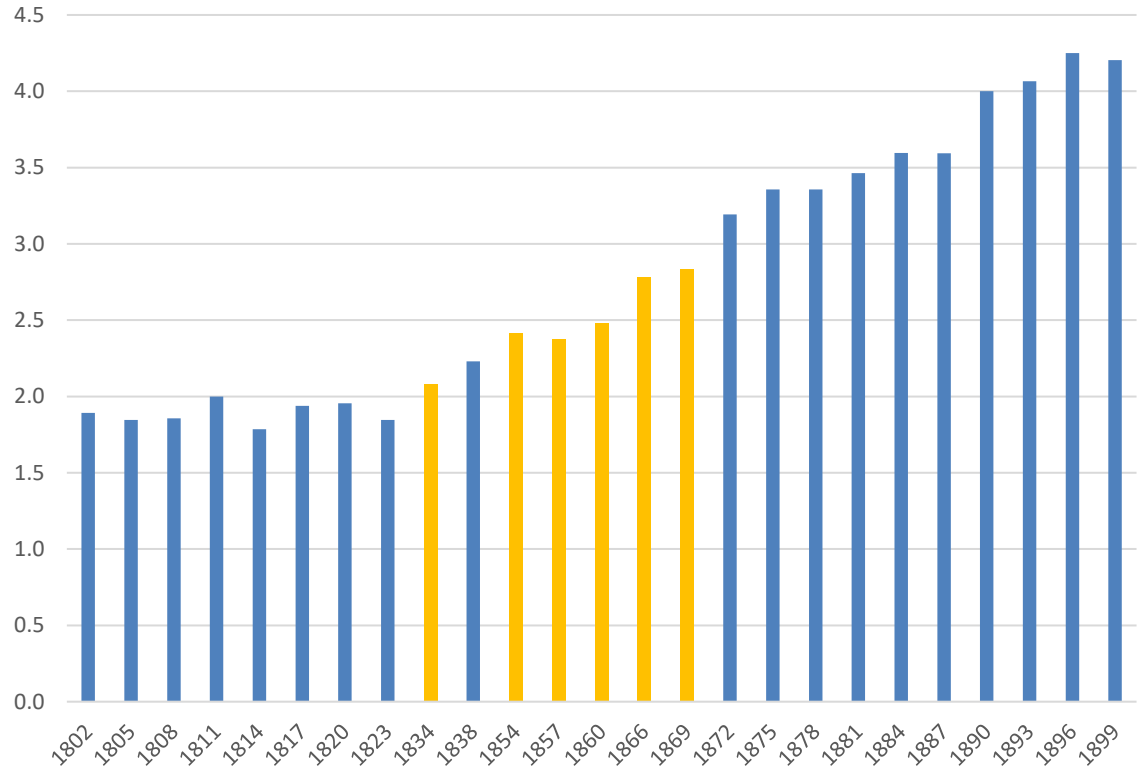
decline. From year to year the consistent pattern of attendance at church services is a mix of growth and decline that would affect different services over the Sunday at different rates. Whatever trends a church historian today might observe from interrogating the data, making the data more comprehensible by applying averages that can identify long-term trends (as will be followed in Method three) will uncover patterns not necessarily apparent to a person attending services at one of the churches in this review in the nineteenth century.

Method three

Method two established a reliable minimum number, but at the cost of undercounting attendances and attendees, perhaps quite significantly. The objective of Method three is to apply adjustments that provide a number range that can better represent religious activity. The single main difference with Method three is that it counts all attendees at a service regardless of age. As discussed earlier in this chapter, including children who attended an Anglican Sunday service is, in the parishes in this review, relatively straightforward and can be added to Line one without a risk of counting a person twice.

Dividing this number into the number of churches at each visitation calculates the average number of attendees that the parochial churches were accommodating on Sundays. This average has been calculated using figures without estimates or projections: it is the average of two discrete numbers and provides a baseline of certainty concerning the minimum number of people who attended a Sunday

Graph 5-36 Method three: average number of Sunday services per church, 1802–99



service.[204] This is graphed in Graph 5-37 (p. 401) as Line 1.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, over the course of the century churches increasingly held more Sunday services: in 1866 St Paul had six services on Sunday, as did the Iron Church in 1869.[205] Graph 5-36 marks the average number of services the churches in this review were running at each visitation, with the years relevant to this section highlighted yellow. At this time in Oxford congregation sizes of a second

[204] It is this minimum number that Pickering preferred for forming any reliable conclusions concerning England's overall index of attendance; see Pickering, '1851 Religious Census', p. 393.

[205] VR 1866, St Paul; VR 1869, Cowley St John.

service were on average 58.2% of their best-attended service.[206] For Method three this percentage is applied to churches that list an uncounted second service. This is graphed in Graph 5-37 as Line 2.

There remain four issues that could be applied to Line 2 to make it still more accurate: one issue addresses overcounting and three issues address undercounting. People who attended more than one Sunday service end up being counted more than once: twicers. The complication that this introduces to attendance numbers is traditionally accommodated by subtracting some portion of any other Sunday services on an assumption that some attendees also attend the church's larger service. Calculating how much to take away remains mostly guesswork. Mann in 1854 deducted half of any afternoon attendances and two-thirds of any evening attendances, but with no evidence to justify this. Historian Michael Watts recommends counting the most-attended service first regardless of when in the day it took place, and then adding one third of the attendances for any other services. Watts based this change on church membership details combined with 'what is known about the frequency of church attendance in the nineteenth century',[207] but this nevertheless remains conjectural, and using membership lists to help calculate churchgoing and attendances raises a host of new difficulties. Field developed a system that was applied in Shropshire where Anglicans and dissenters are counted differently: starting with the best-attended service but then adding one-third of

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206 The median in this calculation was 59.2%, and the mean is very close to the average in nearly all the visitations when calculated year by year. This consistency further underscores the reliability of the calculation.

207 Watts, *The Dissenters*, p. 27.

worshippers at other nonconformist services, and two-thirds for any other Anglican services.[208]

The other three matters risk undercounting: churches with more than two services, occasional attendees, and services held in other buildings. Churches that provided three or more services rarely supplied a count of those who attended these extra services. When they did, numbers ranged from being much lower than other services, to comparable with a second service. Accounting for these services is very difficult, although this variable is almost certainly not nearly as significant as the next two issues discussed.

'Occasional attendees' refers to people with a more nominal affiliation who attended worship less frequently or regularly.[209] The minister at St Mary Magdalen noted this, for example, in 1857, but did not assess how many people this might be.[210] When considering this issue in his analysis of the 1851 census Mann took this into account for Anglican services by doubling the number of attendants: a substantial adjustment.[211] Field has calculated that nominal affiliates form 67% of all churchgoing Anglicans, while communicants constituted 11% and regular hearers

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208 Field still considered this a 'guestimate', however. Clive D. Field, 'Introduction', in *Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire: Returns from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship* (Keele: Centre for Local History, University of Keele, 2004), p. xxiii.

209 Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', p. 152.

210 VR 1857, St Mary Magdalen.

211 Mann, himself nonconformist, multiplied dissenters by two thirds only, as 'the great body of Protestant dissenters are more assiduous in this matter than churchmen'; see Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', p. 152.

22%. Numbers for 1901 were mostly unchanged.[212] The justification of this can be questioned when considering the fourth variable.

Matthew-Jones has noted that people attending services such as the Salvation Army (and in Oxford the Church Army) are 'entirely missed if church attendance is the only yardstick by which religiosity is measured'.[213] It is clear that in Oxford many people attended non-parochial and/or non-consecrated places of Anglican worship on Sunday as well as mid-week, and that in Oxford these omissions included high-status and very low-status people. In chapter four this study identified one cathedral, 18 college chapels, at least nine other institutional chapels, and at least 18 mission churches or halls that in visitation returns and related records are mostly unaccounted for. It is clear that some hundreds of people attended these 45 extra places for Sunday services (this does not account for the unknown number of people who attended a mid-week service or religious meeting in lieu of a Sunday service). Indeed, it is likely that many attendees at these services constituted part of the 'nominal affiliates' identified by Field, especially as many of them would have needed to attend a main parish church for Easter communion and rites of passage. Line 3 reflects adjustments as follows: occasional attendants and twicers are left to cancel each other out. Doing this means treating occasional attenders as being fewer than most projections, and twicers as being greater than most projections, which results in

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212 Field, *Periodizing Secularization*, p. 107 [I have calculated the percentages using Field's table].

213 Lucinda Matthews-Jones, 'Sanctifying the Street: Urban Space, Material Christianity, and the G.F. Watts Mosaic in London', in Timothy Willem Jones and Lucinda Matthews-Jones, (eds.), *Material Religion in Modern Britain: the Spirit of Things* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 59.

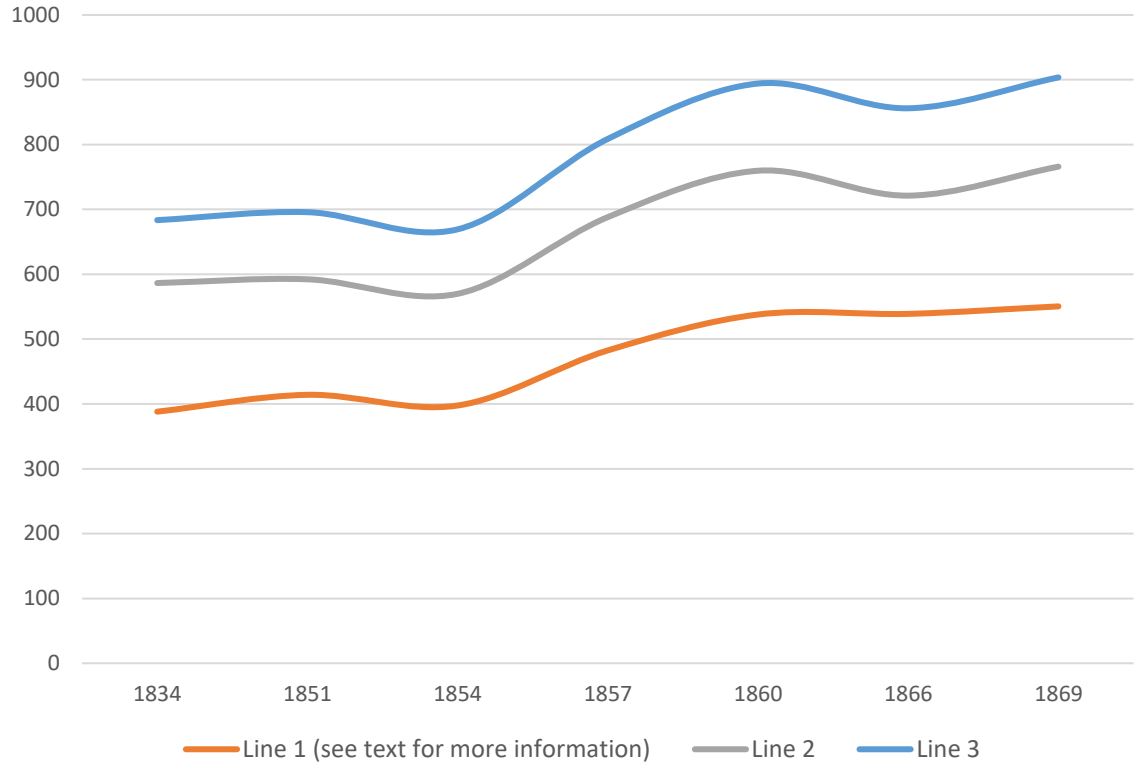
a conservative estimate compared to likely numbers. Line 3 includes these remaining places of worship by adding a conjectural but very conservative estimate of 25% to the figures in Line 1, plus people who attended a second service (calculated by subtracting Line 1 from Line 2). In Graph 5-37 and Graph 5-38 (p. 401) these three lines are graphed to calculate the average number of attendees participating in an Anglican Sunday service, and how much of a population these numbers represented. Of the three lines, while Line 1 is certain at providing a base line, the higher numbers plotted along Line 3 remain the most likely to correctly reflect actual attendees in the churches of Oxford and its surrounding parishes. From 1834 to 1869 the average congregation size grew by almost a third — 32% —from 684 to 904. As a percentage of the population, in the 1830s 42% of the parishioners in this review attended Church. By the end of the 1850s this had risen to 53%, and then up to 56% in 1860 and 1866 before dipping back to 53% in 1869.

On calculating churchgoing, Field has noted that while many factors can influence church turnout, when limiting the scope to churches within the same town some of these variables, including the town's size, regional location, topography, economy, social structure, and history, are all shared between the parishes being studied.[214] As explained in the text, the process of measuring overall numbers of communicants (Graph 5-21 and Graph 5-22, p. 362) and attendees (Graph 5-37 and Graph 5-38, p. 401) entailed applying averages calculated from the data itself. That these averages are being applied to neighbouring parishes that share these significant attributes gives further confidence in the concluding numbers in this thesis.

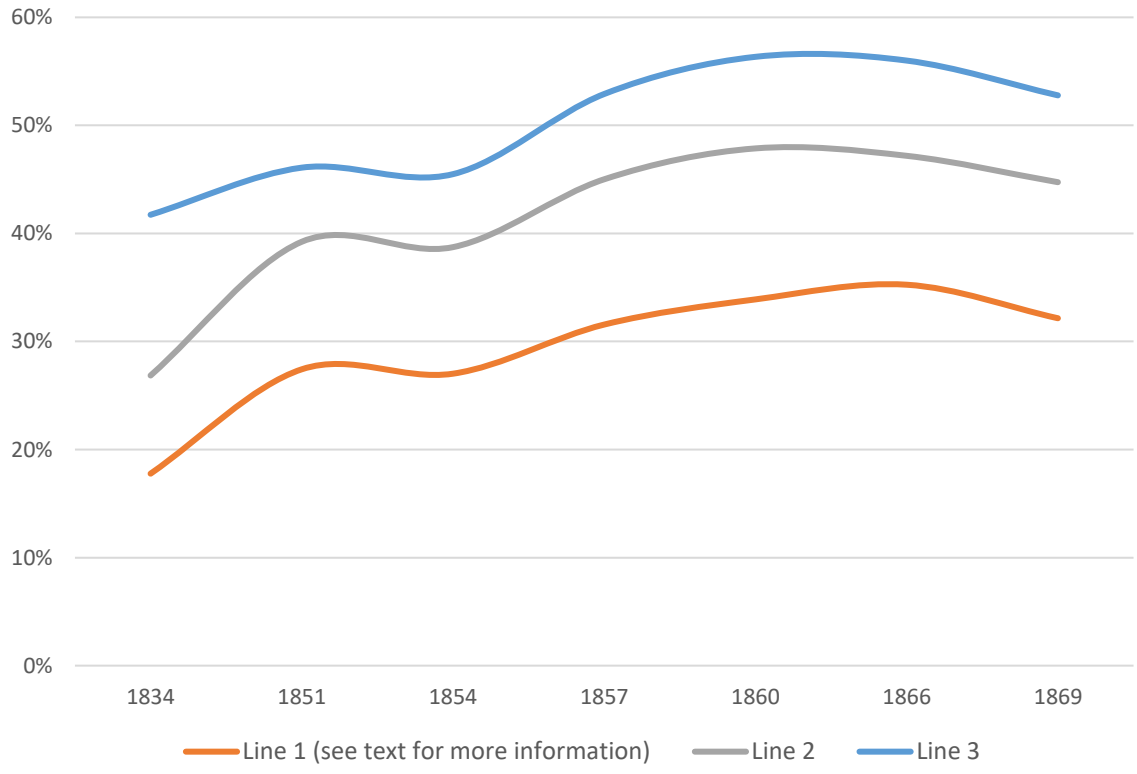
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[214] Field, *Periodizing Secularization*, p. 106.

Graph 5-37 Method three: average attendees on Sunday per church, 1834–69



Graph 5-38 Method three: attendees as percentage of population, 1834–69



Conclusion

This chapter has considered Anglican church participation in Oxford through a variety of factors recorded in the visitation returns: availability of pews, service provision, sermons, communicants, communion services, absentees, and congregation sizes. The issues are complex and calculating reliable attendance figures is not straightforward.

Nevertheless, this research has identified significant increases in both church attendances from 1834 to 1869, and in communicant numbers over the century. Figures from 1866 to 1890 demonstrate that the rising numbers of communicants was not only restricted to major festivals such as Easter and Christmas, as numbers of communicants at regular communion services were also rising. In all these instances, church growth outstripped population growth.

These increases have been corroborated in this chapter with much supporting evidence. Data on Sunday scholars in the parishes under review over the period 1834 to 1872 show a large increase in attendees in the Sunday schools during these years. Seating capacity in Anglican churches increased at the same rate as population growth, and the system of rented and appropriated pews was replaced, at least in part, with free sittings that made the church more available to poorer parishioners. The number of services increased more than tenfold: from 32 each week in 1802 and 1805 to 348 services in 1899. Over the century services were provided at an increasingly wider range of times and days that made it easier for people to find time to attend. Mid-week evening services also became more widely available.

The evidence in this chapter strongly supports the evidence in previous chapters that, in the parishes under review, the churches underwent a period of substantial growth and reinvigoration from after 1834 through to the end of the century.

6: Conclusion

> A duller collection of facts and dates, than Bishop Gastrell's we have never opened … we do not think there is any individual to whom this volume will have any attractions. … But as the worst books are almost sure to contain something useful, so the dullest may furnish something interesting.[1]

As noted in chapter one, episcopal visitation returns are mostly encountered amidst the footnotes of church history, and are usually there to supply communicant and/or attendance numbers. When used in this way, the content from the visitation return is cut and pasted into wherever its data are needed. Some editions of visitation material — either returns or specula — include scholarly introductions that provide historical context: mostly biographical details on the bishop alongside religious and pastoral issues germane at the time of visitation. When these introductions include data that summarizes material, they are following in the steps taken by some

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1 *The Athenaeum*, no. 964 (1846), p. 390 [review of vol. 1 of F.R. Raines, ed., *Notitia Cestriensis; or Historical Notices of the Diocese of Chester*, by the Right Rev. Francis Gastrell (1845)].

nineteenth-century bishops, who, as discussed in chapter two, were the first to start compiling statistical details and did so to support statements in their visitation charges.

There are, however, only two examples of book-length church history writing that use visitation material as the primary resource, one by Jago and the other by Barrie-Curien. This thesis is a third example, and is the first that uses returns from the nineteenth-century. As such, there is no long-established methodological tradition for this thesis to follow. A key premise on which Jago and Barrie-Curien were in agreement, however, was that visitation return data are insufficient on their own to say much of interest. That this principle would need to be applied to the data in this review was clear when starting to research this thesis. While chapter three's ambit is entirely dictated by those named in the visitation returns used in this review, a lot of the biographical information needed to be gleaned elsewhere. Likewise, chapter four's examination of religious buildings and dissent drew heavily on other records, as well as the buildings themselves.

Where this thesis has diverged from previous visitation return studies, however, is its focus. Jago wrote primarily about a person: Robert Drummond, archbishop of York 1761–76. For her, the data within the 1764 returns informed on Drummond's governance and ecclesiological ideals, encapsulating 'his constant endeavor [sic] and … capacity for extra workloads'.[2] Barrie-Curien's study was the Anglican Clergy: their background, education, and careers, and topical concerns such as non-residency and absenteeism. The three chapters that form part two of her study are in some respects

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[2] Jago, *Aspects of the Georgian Church*, p. 257.

similar to chapter three in this thesis, although Barrie-Curien's study in this section of her text is not exhaustive, but based on 500 randomly selected ministers.[3]

In this thesis the focus has instead been a place: Oxford and its surrounding parishes. When writing nineteenth-century English church history, concentrating on a specific area over a particular time-span is well-established. Choosing nineteenth-century Oxford might seem unusual, in that much on the University's religious issues has already been published, some quite recently. But in fact almost nothing has been written on the city's parish churches as a group, and published material on the University allowed some quite complex issues to be treated relatively lightly, freeing up space to examine new findings.

Building a relational database to analyse better the visitation returns has not been done before. Ensuring the database can hold data clean enough to use in an academic piece of writing is technically challenging, and entering details from several hundred returns is tedious and time-consuming. These hurdles are partly why unpublished visitation returns are at present not being exploited to their full potential. Once the information has been captured, however, it is possible to interrogate the data in many different ways, such that patterns and relationships can be identified. Some relationships that were anticipated as being likely to be interesting turned out to be of no demonstrable consequence. For example, comparisons between urban and non-urban parishes did not yield useful differences, mostly likely because the close proximity of the rural parishes to the city made this a less distinctive attribute. Similarly, differences along party lines were found to be more nuanced than first

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[3] Barrie-Curien, *Clergé et pastorale en Angleterre au XVIIIè siècle*, p. 38.

thought. It transpired that for most of the churches in this study designating party labels risked mischaracterising their position. A limited set of five evangelical and five Anglo-Catholic churches could, however, be juxtaposed with the remaining churches, with some differences highlighted in chapter five.

The process of selecting which parishes to look at, and how many visitations to cover, was done with a clear purpose in mind: to have enough data to make meaningful general observations, but for the totality to be manageable enough that a prosopographical study of every clergyman — not a random selection — could also be taken. Once the data had been entered, it became apparent that between the first and second halves of the century there was a considerable rise in the number of clergy and the services they provided. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, this pattern of increase was present in many other datapoints, which in turn led to a decision that exploring this aspect of the data was interesting enough to sustain itself for a book-length project. Two issues seemed particularly interesting: 1) why did this increase take place; and 2) were these identified increases connected with church growth? Chapters three to five addressed these two questions.

In chapter three a study of the 467 clergymen mentioned in the visitation returns identified a critical moment of change that pivoted around the middle of the century. In the second half of the century the officiating minister remained in the parish for longer, and had moved from rooms in college to a more accessible parsonage in the parish. He was more likely to have a wife and children who, alongside an increasing number of assistant curates, could support his pastoral work. In parishes where a University college owned the advowson, the number of ministers selected on the basis that they were part of that college steadily diminished. In their place, ministers

appointed to these parishes were more experienced, and carried out their work with what seems a higher sense of religious calling and piety. Although relatively poorer, ministers in the second half of the century remained part of the respectable classes in Oxford life. Furthermore, the Oxford visitation records provided evidence of clergy reflecting on their pastoral work in more pragmatic, thoughtful, and practical ways in the second half of the century. There was, in fact, a reinvigoration of parochial ministry that seemed to be propelled by a ministerial commitment to what a Clergyman ought to be doing in his parish.

One of the most interesting aspects in this relationship concerns the issue of secularization, as discussed in chapter three. About 40 years ago the secularization model that made causal connections between diminishing religious belief and activity with rising modernity and industrialisation was in its ascendancy. The present academic mood is now more sceptical. Certainly the findings in this thesis challenge the key assumption upon which any secularisation theory in the second half of the nineteenth century necessarily rests: religious activity was not in decline. This is clearly established by nearly every dataset analysed in this study. And yet, there is no question that the 1854 University Tests Act moved the University onto a new trajectory where theological thought receded as a subject that impacted how other topics were taught, or, ultimately, how student development would be measured. It is clear that secularizing developments can in some instances trigger within the Church, and its religious competitors, responses that lead to a widening or intensifying of religious belief within a religious body's area of influence, rather than a decline. Within the nineteenth century, the overall evidence is that this is what took place in Oxford and its surrounding parishes.

Chapter four explored these issues further by examining two of the most important challenges the Church faced in the nineteenth century: establishing enough places where parishioners could meet with Clergy for services or religiously-focused meetings, and contending with dissenters, who by the middle of the century had been identified as a threat to the Church's status as a national institution, and were managing to gather together more influence in parliament. The fabric of the church and the issue of dissent were two of the most-referenced concerns in the returns. Building and raising funds for new churches was an exhausting and time-consuming process that required ministers committed to their parochial obligations and able to draw together others willing to assist.

The revival of interest in gothic architecture over the century impacted church building at Oxford, as it did elsewhere in England. But the city of Oxford holds a special place in the development of architectural taste: it was not a passive object onto which new buildings were placed. Rather, its medieval collegiate and religious buildings helped mould and shape ideals that were percolating in the minds of key influencers, including Ruskin, Pugin, and the Tractarian leaders. Furthermore, nearly all the clergy in this review were alumni of the University, and the city's academic structures aligned with the city's parish churches to propound a statement that fused together ideas on religiosity, scholarly study, and their pre-Reformation histories. The new gothic architecture and restoration work that resulted from this formed an important public declaration on the nature of Anglican faith to anyone looking upon these churches.

In this review the Anglican clergy and the dissenting ministers drew upon each other in developing strategies to promote their message and reach their goals. Some

dissenters at Oxford built expensive, high-status buildings as a way of declaring to the city their respectability and enduring presence. Conversely, many Anglican ministers used cheaper, less permanent structures to conduct services and other meetings that were directly targeting the poorer classes in their parish. By their very nature these structures mostly do not survive today, and they generated a much slighter paper record. But an examination of two of these mission churches, the Boatsman's Chapel and the Iron Church, shines light on the versatility and ingenuity of clergymen and laity in carrying out their spiritual obligations.

Most of chapter five was dedicated to determining to what degree the work of the clergy in this review had translated into measurable success. The three main elements of this are availability of space, numbers taking communion, and numbers attending church. In all three of these factors a rise was plotted that either matched or exceeded population growth. Growth was made possible not only by more physical space, but by a significant increase in the provision of communion, reflected in part by a significant rise in the total number of services that were offered each week, from 32 in 1801 to 348 in 1899.

Counting communicants for Easter and the greater festivals is interesting in that there is sufficient data to examine participation for almost the entire century, with numbers rising from about 2% to almost 11% of the population. Of equal interest are numbers for monthly communion from 1854 to 1887, which increased from 3.3% to 6.5% of the population. This is partly explained by a Church-wide initiative in the second half of the nineteenth century to cultivate a eucharistic community of more strongly-committed churchgoers.

Counting attendees is more problematic. Analysing figures as recorded in the returns proved difficult because it was clear ministers interpreted the question differently, not only between each other but also from one visitation to the next. The approach taken in this chapter was to produce three different attendance figures, where the highest numbers, represented in Graph 5-37 and Graph 5-38 by Line three, remained a reasonable estimation that can be used with confidence. In the 1830s a little over 40% of the residents in Oxford and its surrounding parishes attended Church. This number rose in the late 1850s up to more than 50%, and then up to a bit over 55% in the 1860s.

The overall outcome of this thesis, then, is that it remains of benefit to study Anglicanism at a local level where details on individual parishes and clergy can be accommodated into the historical narrative. In Oxford the high survival rate of its nineteenth-century visitation returns makes it suitable for longitudinal analysis with the assistance of a relational database. The results show a considerable change taking place in the second half of the century: there were more clergy working in the parish, with many displaying a deep commitment to what they considered to be the sacred duties of their position. Many more services were held, the percentage of communicants rose by a factor of five, and from 1854 to 1869 attendance at churches rose by about 15% as a percentage of the population, although the fluctuating nature of this growth makes it quite possible that this overall increase would pass by unnoticed by the Clergy or churchgoers. This result finds that, in the parishes in this review, in the 1850s and 60s a little over half the population in these parishes regularly attended Anglican services.

The most striking absence in this thesis is a study on the substantial pastoral and philanthropic work that the ministers carried out and helped organize. The visitation returns are replete with evidence on this, and, if combined with a more thorough analysis of the section on hindrances at the end of chapter three, could form another book-length study. Another key area that remains to be explored is the church's work in parish schools, education, and catechising. From my own work on these data it is clear that this evidence strongly corroborates the main findings in this thesis, and if taken together are likely to elevate still higher a record of the church remaining one of the most significant influences on life in the parishes of this review.

Appendix 1: Database development

The relational database used for this thesis was developed using Claris FileMaker Pro (version 19.3.2.206 as of 15 October 2021). The two main tables that form the nucleus of the design (highlighted dark red in Image 6-1) are *Clergy Answers* (296 fields) and *People* (76 fields). Eight sub-tables have been created to capture visitation return data relationally. The three tables in one-to-many relationships are shaded blue: *Services* (12 fields; any data describing a church service, such as place, time, and frequency), *Numbers* (16 fields; any enumerative data in the return, such as attendances, confirmations, or Sunday school), and *People notes* (eight fields, records extra biographical data and its source). The remaining tables operate with a many-to-many relationship, but were mostly not used in this thesis except the table *Issues* (five fields; recording concerns and hindrances raised in the return) which was used for the final section in chapter three.

Value tables were created to enter data consistently and were sometimes used in lieu of relational fields. For example, in table *Numbers* all records included a descriptor from a list of 17 values:

1. Adults absent
2. Baptism
3. Communicants
4. Communicants female
5. Communicants male
6. Confirmed
7. Congregation
8. Congregation scholars
9. Dissent
10. Free sittings
11. Hold in church
12. Papists
13. Parish: communicants
14. Parish: families
15. Parish: total
16. Sick Communicants
17. Sunday school

The quality of the enumerative data for each record in *Numbers* was also recorded using one of the following 20 descriptors:

1. About: primary
2. At least: primary
3. Average: mine
4. Average: mine contrived
5. Average: mine from text
6. Average: primary
7. Average: primary accurate
8. Below: primary
9. During: primary
10. Educated guess: primary
11. Exact: primary
12. Over: primary
13. Primary: technically accurate
14. Primary: cannot answer
15. Primary: number in passing
16. Primary: numbers vary
17. Primary: to the best of my knowledge
18. Source unstated
19. Text not number
20. Up to: primary

Image 6-1 Database design: key relational structure

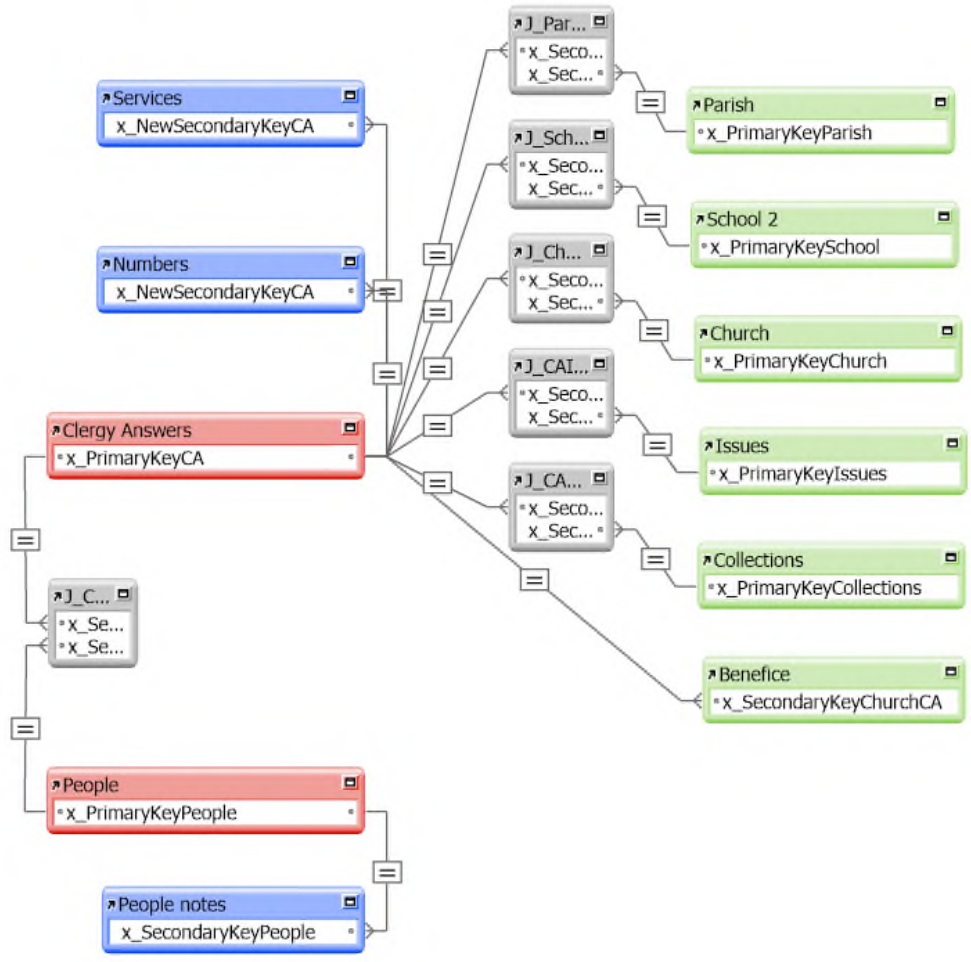


Image 6-2 Main data entry form: people

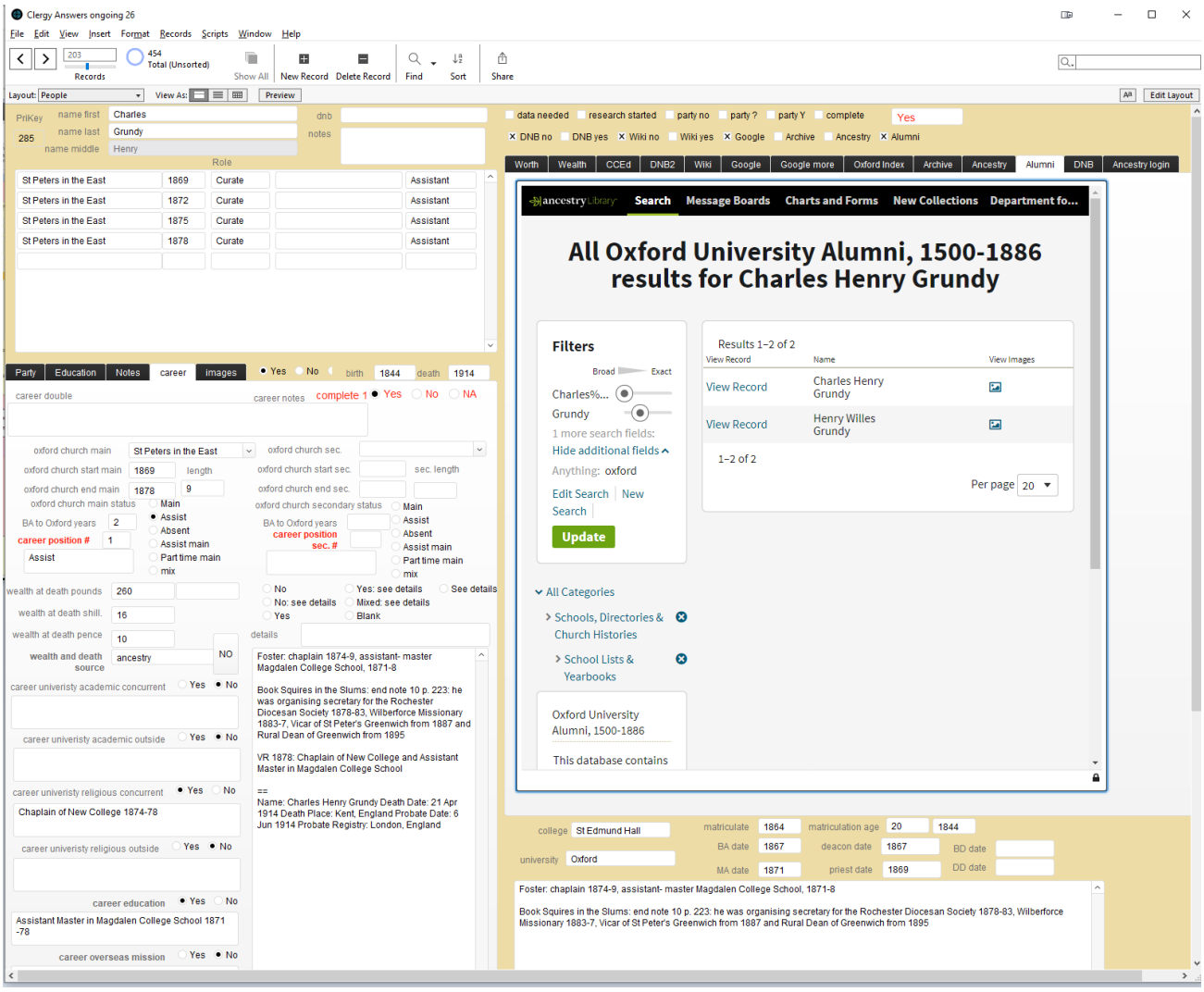
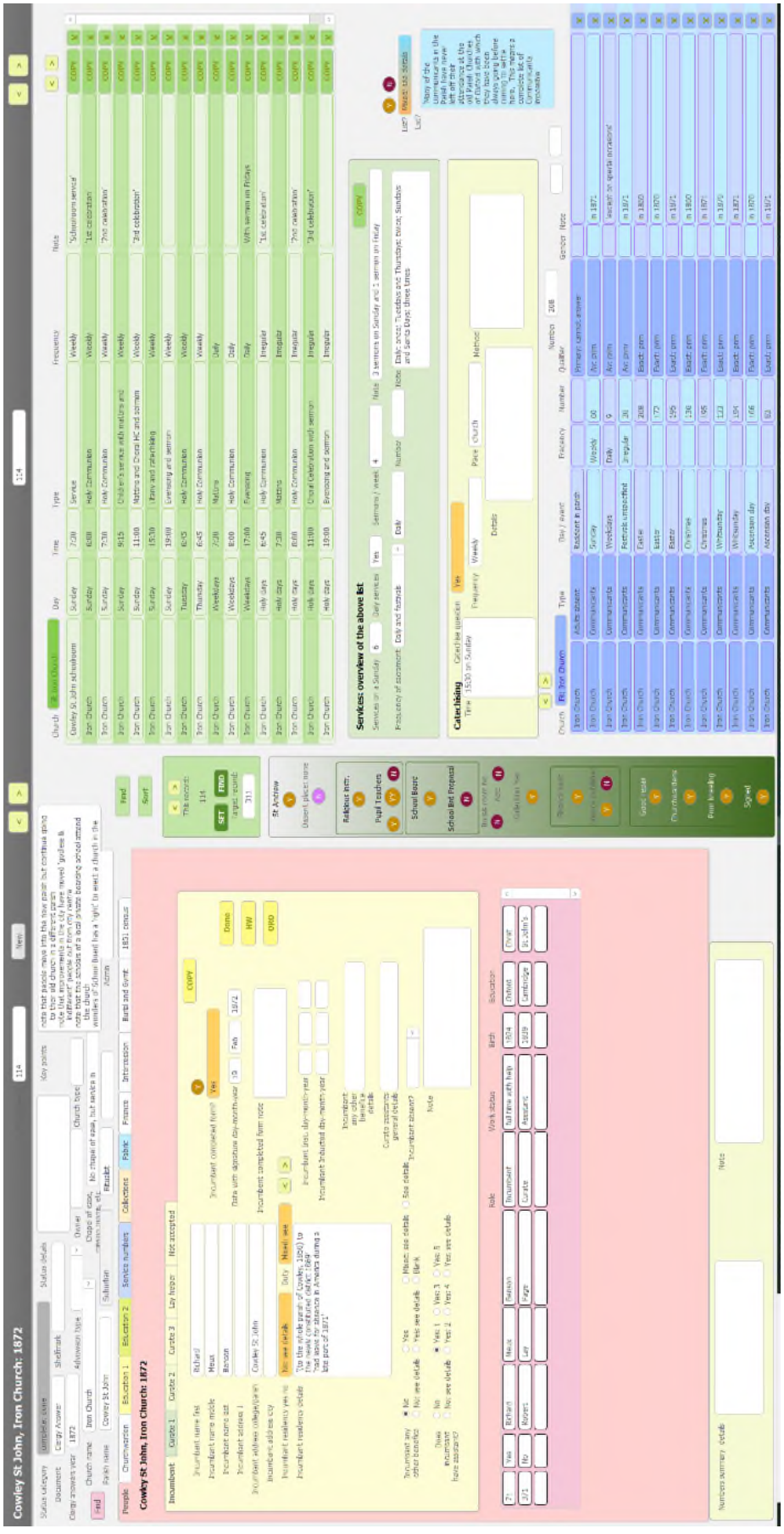


Image 6-3 Main data entry form: clergy answers



Appendix 2: Population numbers by parish and visitation year

To make it possible to graph visitation return data by population it was necessary to calculate population numbers by visitation. This was done by dividing the decadal census population figures in *VCH Oxfordshire*, vol. 1, by ten and then adding this increment to each year. The resulting figures that were then used are below.

Parish	1802	1805	1808	1811	1814	1817	1820	1823
All Saints	574	544	514	485	519	554	588	592
Binsey	56	59	62	66	70	75	80	80
Cowley	349	363	377	392	416	440	464	489
Headington	686	737	789	841	914	988	1062	1147
Holywell	745	784	823	862	898	934	970	974
Iffley	334	346	358	370	417	464	511	552
Littlemore	260	264	268	273	297	321	345	368
Marston	267	276	286	296	309	322	335	344
St Aldate	1087	1215	1343	1472	1591	1711	1831	1787
St Clement	420	443	465	488	572	657	741	983
St Ebbe	862	892	921	951	1065	1179	1293	1690
St Giles	1248	1269	1290	1312	1373	1434	1495	1783
St John the Baptist	112	118	124	130	128	127	125	124
St Martin	452	457	462	468	479	490	502	502
St Mary Magdalen	1459	1499	1539	1579	1722	1865	2008	2132
St Mary the Virgin	338	344	350	356	364	372	380	390
St Michael	858	873	888	904	945	986	1027	1027
St Peter in the East	1055	1071	1087	1104	1188	1272	1356	1333
St Peter-le-Bailey	812	849	886	923	1025	1128	1230	1259
St Thomas	1055	1160	1265	1370	1510	1651	1792	2126
Total	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**

Parish	1834	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869	1872	1875
All Saints	569	531	504	477	425	400	381	378
Binsey	70	74	71	68	81	89	91	82
Cowley	572	963	1152	1341	2564	3260	3915	4488
Headington	1472	1790	1927	2064	2247	2329	2423	2540
Holywell	939	905	910	914	925	930	922	888
Iffley	688	759	764	768	793	807	811	796
Littlemore	403	780	828	876	980	1032	1064	1052
Marston	373	465	459	453	449	448	453	474
St Aldate	1441	1433	1386	1338	1334	1340	1330	1288

Parish	1834	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869	1872	1875
St Clement	1815	2183	2227	2271	2837	3168	3504	3851
St Ebbe	3436	4731	4807	4883	5007	5065	5124	5181
St Giles	3189	4924	4967	5010	5485	5761	6208	7000
St John the Baptist	112	113	120	127	115	106	100	99
St Martin	480	427	405	384	341	320	304	301
St Mary Magdalen	2488	2518	2560	2602	2517	2458	2383	2278
St Mary the Virgin	416	367	344	321	288	272	263	266
St Michael	989	978	934	890	872	870	851	799
St Peter in the East	1138	1093	1043	992	913	875	824	747
St Peter-le-Bailey	1249	1265	1215	1165	1194	1221	1204	1098
St Thomas	3413	4456	4707	4958	5769	6205	6683	7247
Total	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**

Parish	1878	1881	1884	1887	1890	1893	1896	1899
All Saints	375	372	372	372	372	298	267	236
Binsey	72	63	63	63	63	69	63	57
Cowley	5060	5633	5633	5633	5633	8380	8709	9038
Headington	2658	2776	2776	2776	2776	3412	3519	3625
Holywell	854	821	821	821	821	709	709	709
Iffley	781	766	766	766	766	1123	1526	1929
Littlemore	1040	1029	1029	1029	1029	1169	1268	1367
Marston	494	515	515	515	515	709	694	678
St Aldate	1246	1204	1204	1204	1204	1066	1014	961
St Clement	4198	4545	4545	4545	4545	5178	5179	5179
St Ebbe	5239	5297	5297	5297	5297	4868	4725	4581
St Giles	7792	8584	8584	8584	8584	10813	11212	11611
St John the Baptist	98	97	97	97	97	76	72	67
St Martin	298	295	295	295	295	298	275	251
St Mary Magdalen	2172	2067	2067	2067	2067	1661	1555	1448
St Mary the Virgin	269	272	272	272	272	220	215	209
St Michael	747	696	696	696	696	590	589	587
St Peter in the East	670	593	593	593	593	470	431	392
St Peter-le-Bailey	992	887	887	887	887	687	675	663
St Thomas	7810	8374	8374	8374	8374	8526	8664	8802
Total	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**	**12859**

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1808 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.571 M–W
1811 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.572 A–L
1811 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.573 M–W
1814 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.574 A–L
1814 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.575 M–Y
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1860 MSS Oxf. dioc. papers d.180
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